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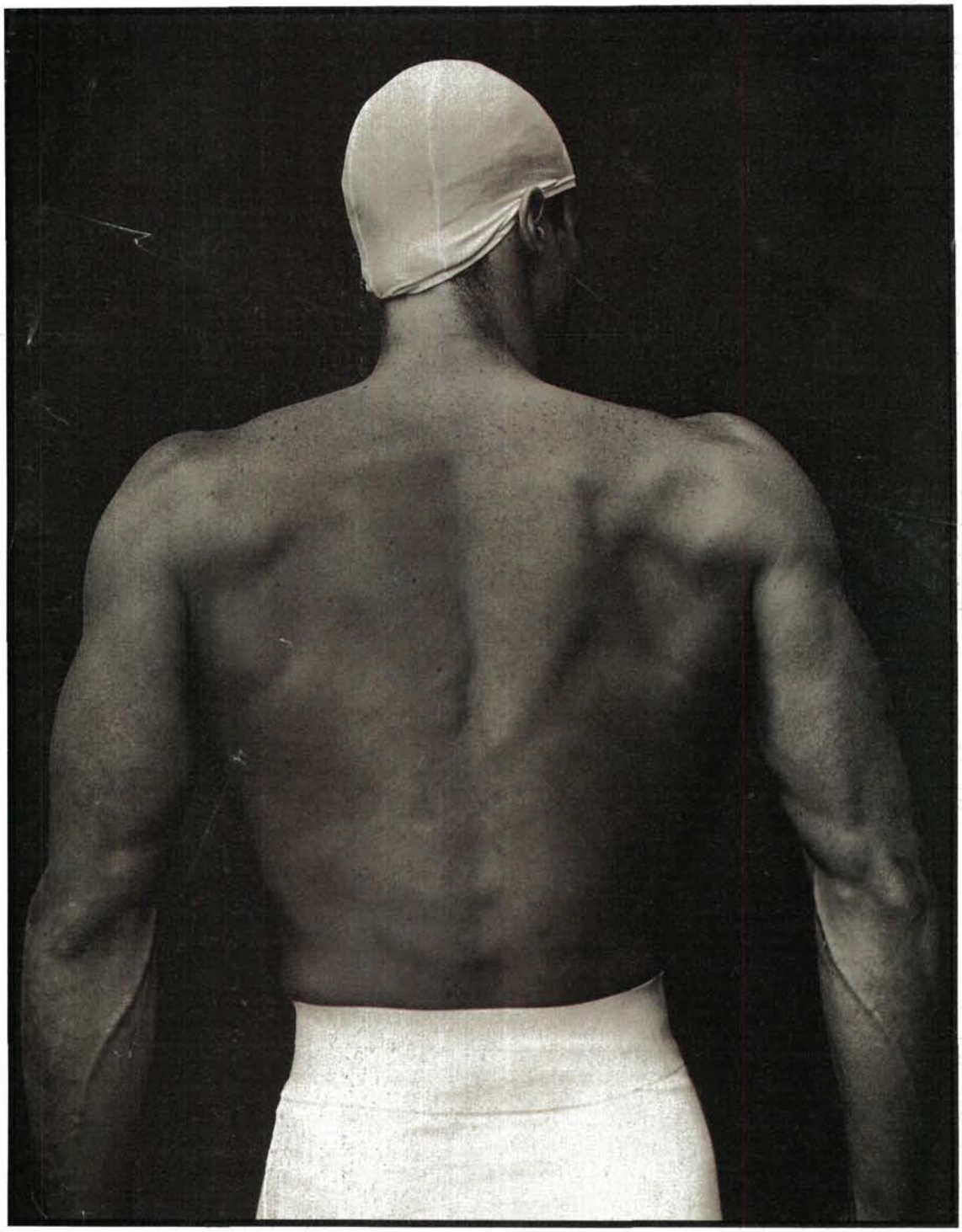

Body special: with Jeanette Winterson, Ros Coward and others

Agnes Heller remembers Andrei Sakharov

Britain's hidden guest-workers; Blood brothers at Smithfield

Free: Ten years of gems from the Weekend Comp

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Revolting Bodies

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Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit;
Thro'bluidy flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

Robert Burns

ROBERT BURNS

The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine-and-fifty swans.

W. B. Yeats

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

The smoother the Irish.

JAMESON

THE differences that distinguish Jameson from certain Scottish whiskies are much more than imaginary. JAMESON is distilled three times (not twice, like Scotch) to produce a purer, smoother taste. BUT then, you'll never really know how smooth the Irish can be until you've tried it.

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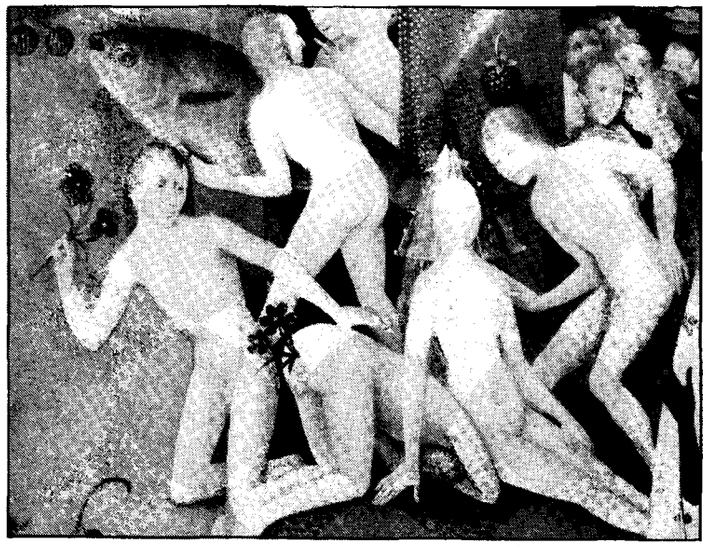

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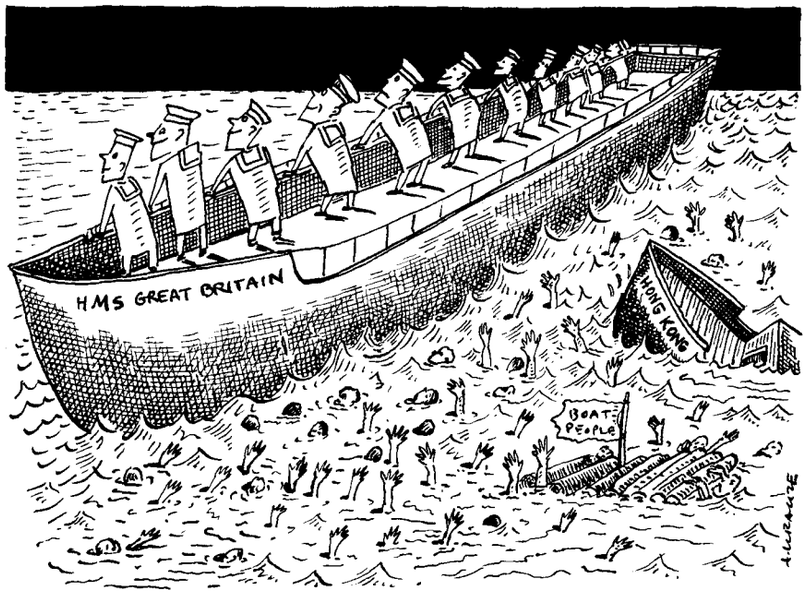
EDITORIAL

Chinese puzzles

We can only resolve the question of the Hong Kong Chinese by rethinking our attitudes to immigration



Andrzej Krauze

Received wisdom about immigration says that it causes more difficulties for the Labour Party than the Conservatives. Labour, after all, is caught between principle and practice: on the one hand a commitment, however slight, to anti-racism, on the other, a conviction that any more black people entering Britain is a sure vote-loser.

The Tories once had a parallel difficulty, with the party split between those who believed Britain ended at Dover, and those who embraced the wider family of empire. But that problem seemed to have gone long ago; and opposition to immigration became one of the core attitudes around which the party coalesced.

Only once in the Thatcher decade has immigration policy turned into a liability for the Conservatives: in 1982, when William Whitelaw brought in a new set of immigration rules which a significant section of the party's backbenchers thought too lax. In an extraordinary episode, these rebels voted with the Labour Party (who thought the rules too tough) to defeat the government. A period of horse-trading ensued, in which David Waddington was brought into the Home Office to show that the government had not gone soft.

This past week, the old certainties have been overturned, over the issue of the Hong Kong Chinese. The government, as we go to press, is expected to give up to 225,000 of the colony's residents full British citizenship, with right of abode here. The prospect appals a large section of the Conservative Party. As Home Secretary, Waddington finds himself cast, reluctantly to be sure, in the Whitelaw role, having to mollify the racists who once saw him as a natural ally. Meanwhile, the strangest people—Nigel Lawson, for example—have been using language oddly similar to the old paternalist talk of obligations to "our people". And Francis Maude, Foreign Office minister, has been making exactly the same point—that right of abode *anchors* people in Hong Kong rather than encouraging them to leave—that people like us have been making all along.

Savour those ironies for a while, then consider, if you can bear it, the Labour Party. It has said it will vote, as in 1982, with the rebel Tory backbenchers. It says that because the scheme can protect only a small proportion of the colony's population, it is unacceptably discriminatory. Perhaps the party convinces itself, but it convinces no one else. The logic is elementary: if they don't want to offer right of abode to all, and they don't want to offer it to some, what is left but to offer it to none? How does this differ from the Tory ultras' position?

The case for granting full right of abode rests uneasily on the idea of continuing colonial obligations. Hong Kong may be British, but it is also Chinese. It ought to be moving towards a self-determination based on this Chineseness, not looking over its shoulder to the past. To ask for the protection of empire is an unattractive option for the people of Hong Kong. But since Tiananmen Square, they have come to accept that it is their only one.

So the government's change of heart is welcome. But Maude ought to see that if his anchoring argument applies to the middle-class Hong Kongers included in the scheme, then *a fortiori*, it also applies to the ones excluded. The favoured 225,000 are already the most mobile section of Hong Kong's community, and are the ones who are now trying to leave. Most of the 3.25 million people will have neither the desire nor the ability to emigrate. The great majority don't speak English. Only *in extremis* would they want to come here.

But the threat that they *might* would certainly worry the People's Republic of China. As the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants asks in its thoughtful report *A Question of Honour*: would the reforms in East Germany have happened half as quickly if the GDR's government hadn't seen the country's population voting with its feet? One of the anthropological clichés about the Chinese is that they hate to lose face; and the disappearance of a whole population is about as big a loss of face as you can get.

But there's no point in granting right of abode without being prepared to answer the question: what if they *did* all want to leave? In response we can point out that other countries have been prepared to accept the consequences of a colonial past, and have survived. During the 1970s, as decolonialisation proceeded in Africa, the Portuguese authorities say that 700,000 colonial Portuguese citizens arrived in one year to join the nine million citizens of mainland Portugal—equivalent to 8 per cent of the population.

But the real answer is to break with ingrained habit and start to see immigration as an opportunity, instead of a social liability. Unfortunately we have left it 30 years too late.

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Scrooged

You don't have to be Scrooge to cackle at the fiasco of this year's Christmas in Britain. The commercial festivities began appropriately with Kylie Minogue, a princess for our tawdry times, switching on the Christmas lights in Regent Street. They ended almost immediately in a rash of pre-Christmas sales, as our frothy new retailers tried to unload silly socks and ties on a public with more urgent matters, like massive mortgage payments, on its mind.

We have witnessed over the past year what is euphemistically termed a market correction. It has been richly deserved. The market system is supposed to supply products to meet demands, but during the mid-eighties it began to look as if only one sort of demand was being met.

A Martian teaching itself about our culture by examining itsadvertising might have concluded that Britain was a country entirely populated by prosperous childless people between the ages of 25 and 40. It was perhaps no surprise that the thrusting new copywriters didn't care about families, or old people. After all, which yuppie wanted to have an *old person* knocking at the door asking to borrow some instant coffee? Sounds a bit close to social work.

What was more puzzling was the obvious lack of interest in old people's money. The elderly population in Britain is proportionately larger and more prosperous than ever before. Where were the dynamic entrepreneurs catering to this new market? The retail sector had been hypnotised into believing that only people with Filofaxes and mobile phones were worth catching as customers.

Now the stricken shopkeepers have received a seasonal lesson about community spirit delivered to their most vulnerable part—their pocket. In the words of Santa Claus, who has always maintained contrary to our prime minister that there *is* such a thing as society: "Ho ho ho."

Blind dates

Thinking on the hoof is a major characteristic of this government. But not thinking at all seems to be a trademark of Health Secretary Kenneth Clarke. His department claims that the NHS Bill is still on course to receive royal assent in summer 1990. The "internal market" will arrive. Hospitals will be able to opt out of health authority control from April 1991 and manage their own budgets, as will GPs with more than 9,000 patients in their care.

No pilot studies are to be done on GP practice budgets. Instead, the 1,000 eligible practices are being tempted by £16,000 in the run-up to 1991 and £32,000 thereafter to employ a manager. A further sweetener will allow them to claim back 75 per cent of their expenditure on computers, compared to 50 per cent available for other GPs. The results of a project funded by the NHS Management Executive to provide feedback for the district health authorities on their new role are not expected until summer 1991. Meanwhile, the mixed results from six hospitals now piloting the government's Resource Management Initiative (see *New Satesman Society*, 28 July) will not stop 50 more adopting new data systems by 1991.

This unresearched bill remains substantially unchanged and impervious to its critics. Kenneth Clarke, we understand, is full of confidence. He is in a minority of one. Only this week his department announced a new post of Chief of Research and Development for the National Health Service.

Now, why didn't he think of that before?

Shutting up shop

The closed shop has always induced deep embarrassment in many people on the left. The very name, archaic and forbidding, sounds like something civil libertarians should never want to defend. Not that they haven't tried: NCCL was violently split on the issue a decade ago, but refused to condemn compulsory unionisation. Yet the case for it has invariably been pragmatic and shabby, hard to square with the left's libertarian self-image. And the practice has too often meant routine abuse, petty corruption and a huge barrier to equal opportunities.

Tony Blair's announcement that Labour will no longer support the closed shop, as the European Social Charter exludes it, is welcome if overdue. But the party is doing the right thing in the wrong way, and probably for the wrong reasons. A constituency statement by a shadow minister after talks with the big unions is hardly consistent with Labour's democratic profile. Isn't party conference supposed to have some say, or has that pretence finally been dropped? And where does Blair's statement leave Labour policy on "closed shops" in the professions? Or in firms where the employers rather than unions insist on it?

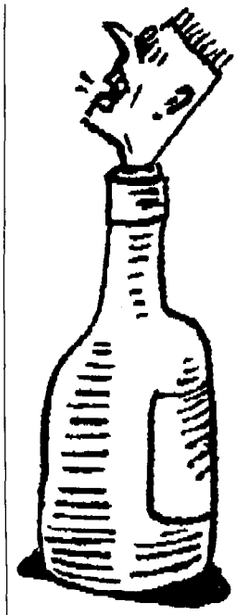
Still, Labour can now take the initiative on union reform, though it needs more than the language of individualism Blair uses. Trade unions are collectivist bodies by definition. But that need not make them enemies of individual rights, innovation or efficiency. A new model of unionism that stresses broad social issues, workplace democracy and links with ecological and other movements is in prospect. The best and brightest in British Labour circles are starting to think that way already. In the nineties, they will have to redeem 40 wasted years of inertia and conservatism.

The last crusade

As regime after regime collapsed east of the Elbe, it became obvious that even in Romania change must come. But it was always likely that there could be no peaceful victory for people's power in Ceaucescu's great national dungeon. Widespread bloodshed, fuelled by ancient ethnic hatreds and unleashed by the foulest European dictator since Hitler, seemed inescapable. As we go to press, it is growing clear that the worst may have started to happen.

Nicolae Ceaucescu holds a unique place in the rogues' gallery of half-witted megalomaniacs and little grey men who have dominated eastern Europe since 1945. Nowhere else was dynastic rule so naked, the cult of personality so grotesque. The only apt parallels are with the Third World's worst despotisms. But Nicolae and Elena, who run the country with assorted children and cousins, are a matrimonial team who make Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos look benign. A *glasnost*-era Russian joke defined socialism as the longest and most painful road from capitalism back to capitalism. Romanian "socialism" has been a short but bitter road from feudalism back to feudalism, with an absolute monarch and a near-starving peasantry.

It's hard to resist an ethnocentric sort of outrage. Europeans aren't supposed to behave like this, still less people who look and speak so like Italians. Travelling in Romania is, one British visitor commented, like meeting Italians inexplicably shovelled into hell. Now they are trying, predictably led by the Hungarian minority, to escape the inferno. Our last hopes of 1989 will be with them. But our worst nightmares for 1990 are of an old European spectre: Balkan war, with civil strife in Romania, Hungarian intervention, tanks on the streets and blood in the gutter of a hundred towns.



The free-market Social Affairs Unit has fielded plenty of flak for its seasonal suggestion that quite a lot of what you fancy does you good. Furious alcoholism experts will not be pleased to know that the offending study's editor, unit director Digby Anderson, was recently appointed to the Economic and Social Research Council. How about some quick changes to those grant applications?: "Stout parties: the pub as community resource"; "Gin as tonic: oiling the wheels of commerce"; "Claret and chips: social life in high-tech industries"...

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DIARY

Sean French

The current rash of coverage about the end of the decade allows me to revive one of the most boring arguments I know of. I need to begin it by taking you back to the moment of our chronology in which the year 1BC was followed by 1AD. There was no year zero and, therefore, the first decade ended on the last day of 10AD and the first century on the last day of 100AD and the first millenium on the last day of 1000AD. Therefore, the end of the decade will actually occur next year.

Some people—if they are still awake—might argue that when we talk of decades we talk of the sixties and the seventies, even if that left the people at the end of the very first decade short of a year.

However, there can be no doubt at all that the moment to celebrate the end of the second millennium is, *pace* Prince and everyone else, 31 December 2000, not 1999. I have read that people have already hired the Albert Hall and the QE2 for the last night of the wrong year. If I should happen to be rich by that time, I shall hire 100 actors to wander around during that evening informing everyone in E L Wisty voices that the festivities are occurring a year early.

And I will be writing my look back at the decade, if I remember, in a year's time.

You may, quite understandably, have thought that no other argument could be as boring as that but you would be wrong. When I was about nine years old I read a letter in what was then my favourite magazine, *Football Weekly*, about a very dull sporting controversy. Commentators have always talked about strikers blasting the ball into the *back* of the net. In fact, the correspondent argued, the ball was hitting the *front* of the net. What the commentators really meant was the back of the *goal*.

In much the same way, Roy Plomley wrote in his book about *Desert Island Discs* that he used to receive at least one letter a week explaining there was no such thing as a desert island, and that what he really meant was a *deserted* island. I hope that the army of pedants is pursuing its cause with Sue Lawley.

That is quite boring but "interesting facts" can also be very boring indeed. One of the most boring interesting facts I know (which, I ought to say, is rendered even more oxymoronic by also being entirely untrue) is that the company who make Marlboro cigarettes are connected to the Ku Klux Klan. The "proof" of this is that three Ks are supposedly incorporated into the red and white design on the packet.

This is so very dull, particularly when demonstrated at length repeatedly in pubs over many years, that there are people of my acquaintance who have finally been driven either to give up smoking Marlboro cigarettes, or to give up me.

While on territory that is dangerously close to home, I can't resist adding that a particularly fruitful source of dullness is the sort of jolly item that usually appears in the diary column of newspapers.

Amusing misprints are usually boring, as are people who have "hilariously" appropriate names, such as a butcher called Mr Porkchop and so on.

Every so often, because this column has "Diary" written at the top of it, someone mistakenly believes that I am a real journalist and sends me a press release about the sort of event that is covered in the professional diaries.

Last week someone rang me up and invited me to look at the wedding dress that had been worn by the star of some antipodean soap opera or other. I didn't manage to get to the event but other people did, because I saw several mentions in the media in the days afterwards.

More bizarre still is when publicity officers actually write your gossip item for you. Last week I received a press release from a wine company containing a "humorous anecdote" concerning a famous brand of champagne they market which they hoped "could prove of some interest to your column".

The amusing story was of some thieves who had broken into an off-licence in Salisbury and had "taken one thing only—a bottle of champagne X". (I have deleted the name of the champagne in the spirit in which *Blue Peter* presenter Valerie Singleton used to remove the makers' names from plastic washing-up liquid containers with wire wool, before she cut them up to make economical Christmas presents.)

What I found interesting about the less-than-uproarious tale was that it was written in a plausibly jaunty diary-style, with a diary-type heading. If publicity officers can do it so easily, then perhaps journalists should get on with something more worthwhile.

Writing in his pugnacious *Sunday Times* column Norman Macrae cited our large supermarkets as proof of the social changes that have occurred in Britain over the past few years. In the past the different classes shopped in different shops, he argued, whereas now they all go to Sainsburys and buy the same sort of food.

Of course, this isn't quite true. Alexandra Artley wrote an excellent article in the *Spectator* earlier this year about the new kinds of supermarket that have grown up recently to cater for Britain's poor. They specialise in cheap kinds of processed food, strange cuts of meat, and often don't sell vegetables at all.

The sociology of even the more upmarket supermarkets is actually quite complex, so much so that I wonder if Norman Macrae actually does his own shopping.

The social composition of the shoppers at my local Sainsburys shifts radically at different times of the day, especially on Saturday. You have to get up very early in the morning to get a sight of the prosperous and successful clientele. They arrive in their Volvos as the shop is opening and pounce on the fresh-squeezed orange juice and the exotic fruits.

During the day the shop gradually slides downmarket as the less motivated sections of society gradually make their way into the increasingly congested shop.

In the last hour of trading the social complexion changes entirely. The shop now fills with people who are not planning to entertain or to cook something complicated. They are here for the magic hour at which the shop starts to sell off perishable food at knockdown prices.

The last time I was there at that time there was a minor fracas which needed to be sorted out by an employee. "I just hate Saturdays, I really do," the man said as I noticed from his badge that he was the customer relations manager. That's the sort of amusing event that would make a good diary item.

ROGER WODDIS

The Lolly and the Gravy

The lolly and the gravy.
A killing on the phone;
Salvation lies less in doing good
Than in loving what you own.

O the rising of the shares,
And the assets you sell dear;
The quoting of the FT Index
Makes pious punters cheer.

The lolly is a blessing
And homelessness a sin;
You'll have to use the stable,
There's no room at the inn.

O the rising of inflation,
And the lowering of hope;
The only way to cleanse your soul
Is by looking at a soap.

The lolly warms your cockles
When it nestles in your lap,
And it proves the social charter
Is a load of Marxist crap.

O the rising of the Sun,
And the birthday of Our Lord;
We can't wait till sweet Jesus Christ
Is Chairman of the Board.

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TOM WOLFE. *THE* REAL STUFF

To end the year with a bang, The Telegraph Weekend Magazine carries one of the most controversial pieces of writing to come out of America this year.

Tom Wolfe's 'Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast' is his literary manifesto for the new social novel. It is more than just a spirited defence of the journalist as novelist.

It does for the modern American novel what Wolfe's 'The Painted Word' did for modern American painting.

His thesis that realism is the true electricity which powers the great novel is argued with a clarity and conviction which, in his own words on Zola, 'makes the hairs on your arms stand on end.'

You can read it in The Telegraph Weekend Magazine on Saturday December 30.

The Daily Telegraph

A quality shared by millions

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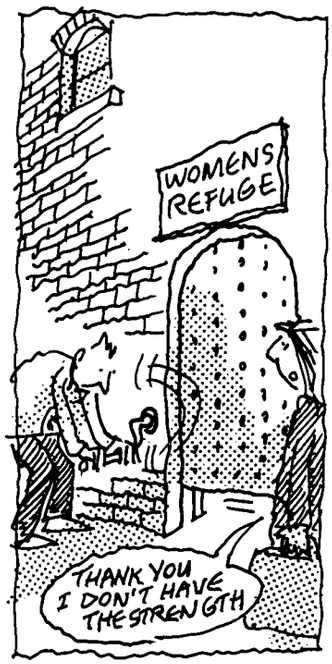
LETTERS



Victims' voices

It is good to see that the *NSS* is now beginning to seriously address the issue of male power and violence against women ("Trial by rape", 24 November and "Blaming the victim", 1 December). After being involved with the local Women's Aid Refuge and seeing the physical and emotional injuries consequent on such power and the travesty of the response both from the police and the courts—evidence of concrete research in this area is important.

However, the level of discussion which has ensued in your letters page as a result of the articles has been appalling (1 December and 15 December). You have printed correspondence which has both distorted the issue and has been highly defensive. Sue Lees has pointed to the class bias in the judicial system, but to imply that class rather than gender is the key factor in rape trials is to completely miss the point.

Every week women enter refuges with serious physical injuries (concussion, broken limbs, knife wounds) or because their children have been sexually abused or because they have been raped. *NSS* should address these issues thoroughly and constructively if progress is to be made in this area and the magazine is to be taken seriously by women.

Dot Moss
66 Greenwood Mount
Meanwood
Leeds

Who needs a trial?

Sue Lees's articles on rape trials (24 November and 1 December) appear to be based throughout on the premise that every man charged with rape is guilty of that offence. Only with reference to her monstrous proposal—that in a criminal trial for rape the standard requirement of proof "beyond any reasonable doubt" should be replaced by the lesser criterion of the "balance of probabilities"—does she mention the possibility of a false charge being brought to trial.

She writes: "The police make rigorous enquiries before they proceed with a case and are unlikely to be fooled by false allegations." Why then bother to have a trial? Perhaps Sue Lees thinks that a certificate by a police officer that he or she is satisfied that the man raped the woman ought to be sufficient by itself to ensure a conviction.

We hope that if ever Sue Lees is summoned to serve on the jury in a trial for rape she will consider carefully whether she ought to disqualify herself on the grounds that she can scarcely envisage any situation in which she would support a verdict of "Not guilty".

(Mrs) N A Campbell and (Mr) B W Campbell
5a Battlefield Road
St Albans

Meaningful images

In his recent article on "The Image Religion" (*NSS*, 1 December) Dick Hebdige seems to feel there is something rather sinister or something to be regretted in the development of the Corporate Identity industry.

However, I wonder if the development of corporate identity is not a reflection of something bigger and something rather more encouraging.

Those people involved in the meaning business (clerics or advertising copywriters) have generally been circumscribed in the scripts they could write (the images and meanings they could create) by the intrinsic physical, technical or structural qualities of the product. Thus, to be contemporary, cars are "about" power, thrust, smooth lines and performance (most easily expressed through the metaphor of sex).

But it is this that is changing. Products and organisations no longer "know their place". The power of "reality" to circumscribe the meaning of things is weakening. Meaning is more discretionary. You therefore need meaning specialists to help you choose (not so much discover) what you are. Hence the rise of the meaning industry, including corporate identity.

Sinister stuff? In a sense this is a new and unfamiliar situation, the answer is potentially yes. But we should ask why this discretion has arisen? I believe that what we now find is a characteristic of products or organisations is fundamentally a result of new characteristics of people. It is people who no longer know their place.

That it is happening I have little doubt. Less often do we hear the response "people like us don't... (drink wine, wear smart clothes, go to the opera, eat anything but chips)". That negative and possibly cramping attitude was characteristic of a more class-bound and rigid society.

It does not take an especially erudite individual to notice the opposition between the thesis advanced here and a more Marxist perspective.

For those who fear something sinister arising as a result of this freedom of "meaning" from the chains of reality ask the people in eastern Europe what guarantees the primacy of reality ever gave them.

R Tyrell
The Henley Centre
2-4 Tudor Street
London EC4Y OAA

Cubing doesn't square

I train maths teachers in the appreciation of misleading diagrams and the misuse of statistics. The best examples are usually to be found in the soar-away *Sun*, but there was a classic on page 19 of last week's *NSS* (15 December).

My beef is with the exclamation marks purporting to represent relative values accorded to social and security issues. It is very naughty to have one exclamation mark eight times as tall as another to represent eight times the number. Even worse is the 3-D effect given by those drawn in front of or behind other figures. The two "hot-air balloons" on the TV screen representing 48 per cent and 10 per cent feed a message to the eye of 48 cubed to 10 cubed. A relative proportion of 5:1 is visualised as 110:1.

My advice is that if, when doing your Christmas shopping, you see a bottle of whisky twice the price and twice as tall as normal, snap it up.

Dudley Ward
Sussex University

Time for a change

In line with *NSS*'s creditable backing of the "democratic agenda" of Charter 88, isn't it time now to re-open the subject of a change of the magazine's name? I'm aware of the long history of *New Statesman*, but the current electoral system has been around a long time (too long) as well. The name could even be the subject of a readers' poll—how about *Citizen?*

Nigel Currie
14 Southfield Road
Cotham
Bristol

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards

● The Ministry of Defence has paid £5,021 in compensation to Paul Adorian, a farmer in Kirklington, Carlisle, "in respect of the loss of one of his llamas, as a result of low-flying military aircraft".—*Independent* (C A Jones)

● Much of the recent legislation affecting financial arrangements on divorce makes a lie of the common misconception that men always enjoy the upper hand in the eyes of the law in financial matters. The law now quite clearly cuts both ways and rich wives can now be obliged to maintain their impecunious ex-husbands.—*Guardian* (E F Kemsley)

● People in the north west behave differently from the rest of Britain, according to *Are you Normal?*, published this week. What for example, would the average north-westerner do to prepare for the Queen dropping in for tea? A good deal less than the average Briton. One in six would mow the lawn and buy new teacups. One in ten said they would repaint the house and one in 20 would buy a new toilet seat cover.—*Manchester Evening News* (George Moor)

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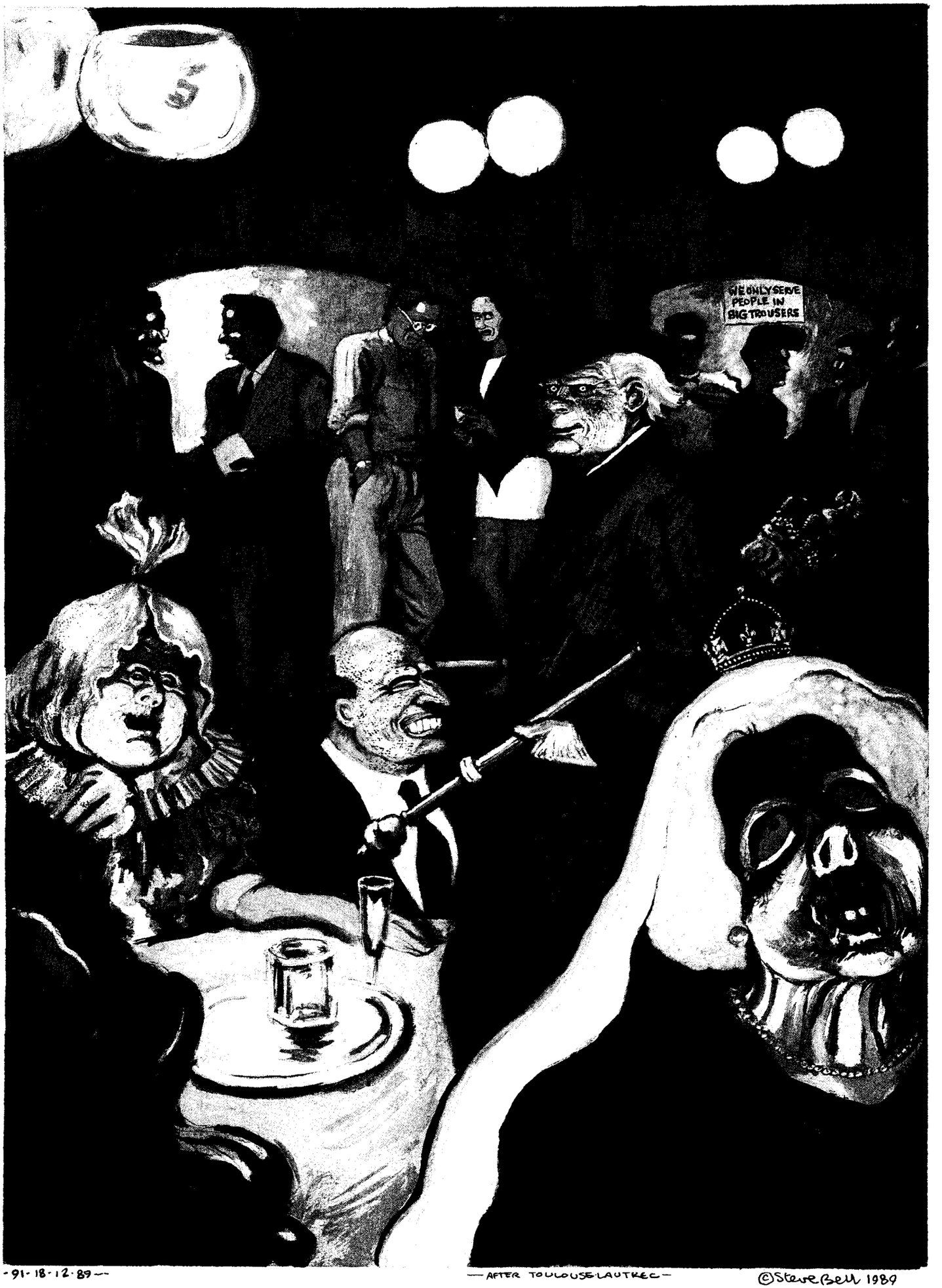

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Taken to the cleaners

Germany has its Turks; Kuwait has its Filipinos; and Britain has its Nigerians. The difference is that we turn our guest workers into criminals. Jolyon Jenkins reports

Norman Tebbit can say what he likes: the British government's fervent wish is that people should not get on their bikes, but should stay exactly where they are.

Last Tuesday, 88 police and immigration officers made the point in spectacular fashion by arresting 64 cleaners, all but one of them West African, who were working at BP's headquarters in the City of London. Forty-five of them were either removed immediately, without appeal, or were scheduled for deportation. The raid, code-named "Operation Tanker" (presumably: BP, oil, tanker), was the second biggest ever in this country. (Across the other side of the world, Hong Kong officials were almost simultaneously doing their bit, with rather more publicity, to discourage global migration.)

It's hard to trace people caught up in Operation Tanker. Some were expelled from the country within a few hours of being detained. Many do not have solicitors. Some have no relatives here. Some do not want publicity. The case of Florence Kuku, a Nigerian woman in her 20s, seems to be typical. She came to Britain at the start of this year as a visitor, with her aunt and another relative. After she had been here for a while, she decided to enrol as a student at a private college in London. She applied to the Home Office to change her status from visitor to student and might well have succeeded.

In the meantime, while she was waiting for her application to be processed, she got a part-time cleaning job with Initial Contract Services (director: Norman Tebbit), which has the contract to clean the BP building. So far, the situation is straightforward: she was breaching her entry conditions by working, and for this she could be deported. Deportation is an act that involves a degree of "due process": a notice of intention is served, and there are limited rights of appeal. But the immigration service went further and decided that she was an *illegal immigrant* and could therefore be *removed*, without appeal. Removal is a purely administrative process and can be very speedy indeed.

"Illegal immigration" to many people still evokes images of small fishing boats depositing Pakistanis on the Kent beaches at dawn. But nowadays all that's necessary to be an illegal immigrant is that you "materially deceived" an immigration officer when you entered the country. In Florence Kuku's case, the people who interviewed her last week decided that she always intended to study, and that she had therefore materially deceived the immigration officers by applying for entry as a visitor. Florence agreed that she "had it in mind" that she "might" do some studying. This was enough to get her removed back to Nigeria within 36 hours of being picked up. She never saw a solicitor, because the police and immigration officers convinced her that she didn't need one.

The odd thing about this kind of case is that the Department of Employment has no objection to overseas students taking part-time jobs, so long as it doesn't interfere with their studies, and provided they get permission from their Job Centre. If the Home Office had processed Florence Kuku's application quicker, she would probably have been able to get permission. Instead, she became a casualty of their own inefficiency.

The comparative news-worthiness of operations like Tanker masks the fact that such mass actions are responsible for only a very small proportion of the people removed or deported each year. The annual total is now a record 5,500 (projecting from quarterly figures so far available). Many of the people behind the figures simply vanish; victims of "administrative" decisions which depend entirely on an immigration officer's assessment of someone's state of mind when they entered the country.

The day before Tanker, an immigration officer and some police officers raided an address in Peckham, south east London. They arrested two of the people they found there, and charged one of them with criminal offences which we can't report for legal reasons. While the officers were there, they raided the house next door and found four Nigerians, whom they summarily removed to Nigeria. The four never saw a lawyer, and no one knows anything about them. At the first house they also arrested a young Nigerian woman, Anthonia Taiwo, and took her to Peckham police station. She spoke to a solicitor two hours later and told him that she wasn't going to say anything to the police until he saw her. But before he got to the station she apparently changed her mind and agreed to be interviewed.

The case against her seems tissue thin. She had come into the country as a visitor, saying she wanted to stay for two or three weeks. But to her surprise, the immigration officer gave her formal permission to stay for six months. She decided to take advantage of his apparent generosity and stay three or four months. At the time of the raid, she had already booked a flight home for 29 December, well within her allowed time period. While being raided she told some lies to try to distance herself from the two other people being arrested. But there's no evidence that she said anything untruthful when she entered the country. All the same, the immigration officer in her case classified her as an "illegal immigrant" and put her on the plane before her solicitor ever saw her, and without giving her a chance to collect her belongings.

The immigration service have their own fish to fry; at the moment they seem to be singling out Africans for special treatment. But the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants is convinced that police in London are using the immigration laws to harass black people—predominantly Africans, but British citizens too. We have already produced leaked figures (*NSS*, 4 August) which suggest that, in London alone, 150 black people are taken into police stations each week and checked out for immigration offences: 100 of them turn out to be innocent. When the *Observer* repeated the story, a Scotland Yard spokesperson said it was untrue.

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Consider, then, the case of 24-year-old Muyideen Aileru, a Nigerian student who lives in Tottenham, north London. He is studying banking at a college in Kentish Town. His father, a businessman and former politician, pays all his fees and maintenance. At the end of last month Muyideen says, he was driving home with a young friend, when his car broke down in the middle of the road. He couldn't shift it, so went to find someone to help tow it to a garage, leaving his friend in the car. While he was gone, some police officers came by. They made the friend take them to Muyideen's flat, and let themselves in with his keys, which had been left in the car.

Muyideen, returning to his car, found it gone, and so went home—to find five police officers rummaging through his flat. "They wouldn't let me go into my bedroom, they wouldn't tell me what they wanted, and it was almost an hour before they let me go to the toilet. In the end, one of them made me take off my clothes first, and then went with me to the toilet."

Among his papers they found a bank statement, which showed that McDonald's had paid money into his account. This, they said, showed that he had been working there. In fact, says Muyideen, his young friend had a job at McDonald's, and was having his wages paid into Muyideen's account, because he didn't have one of his own. "I said, I'm not working: we can go to McDonald's and ask them."

But instead, they arrested him and took him to the police station. They held him there for six days, and then transferred him to an immigration detention centre in Gosport, near Portsmouth. By now, the immigration officers were convinced that he had been working for a local taxi firm. The evidence seems to be that they had found a Department of Employment form in his flat which he had filled in to get permission from the Job Centre to do a few hours work with the taxi firm each week, helping them with accounts. He denies that he actually did any work. Anyway, they plan to deport him, although he is now out on bail.

He's quite bitter about the experience. "When I have finished my course I want to go back to Nigeria. They don't give us a chance here. You don't have to treat people like they treated me. I get money from home to do my studies, to pay the rent, and I don't need to work. I'm not a criminal, so why do they treat me like one?"

I'm taking his word for it that he wasn't working—but what if he was? Some of the students picked up in raids clearly *are* illictly moonlighting—as security guards, fast food fodder, or office cleaners. Their misfortune is to be caught between the private sector employers who need their labour because the native workforce won't take the jobs on offer, the Department of Employment, which tacitly recognises this fact, and the Home Office which needs to bare its teeth from time to time. A *Gastarbeiter* scheme exists, *de facto*, but can't be officially acknowledged. The result is an enormous waste of everybody's time and money: students get sent home with their courses half finished and no chance of getting their fees refunded. The state squanders public money on air fares and detention costs. And our unofficial guest workers are criminalised and prey to blackmail: there are stories of employers shopping their African workers to the immigration service rather than pay their wages.

Martin Slavin

They don't give us a chance here. You don't have to treat people like they treated me.

Any official conspiracies that exist here are fuzzy and diffuse. Some commentators, looking for neat connections, thought they saw in the coincidence of Operation Tanker and the removal of Vietnamese from Hong Kong a ploy by the government to deflect attention from its domestic troubles by hiking immigration up the political agenda.

But all the evidence suggests that immigration policy is guided less by central directives than by freelance initiatives launched by junior members of the immigration service. This is not surmise: we've published internal documents (*NSS*, 28 July and 4 August) which show that officers at Isis House (the immigration service's London office dealing with internal control) are deliberately targeting certain nationalities in order to bring about changes in law and policy, and that in some cases, senior officers and Home Office ministers aren't being told.

Immigration officers are always coming up with new ideas for changing the law to give themselves more powers and remove themselves from public scrutiny. Mr Rob Salton, a Chief Immigration Officer at Isis House, has devised his own scheme to "reduce the pressure on the courts". (The title Chief Immigration Officer is misleading: CIO is the second most junior post in the service.) He recently wrote a memo, which has been leaked to us. It is a waste of taxpayers' money, he says, to put foreigners on trial for breaking the law. "I would submit," he writes, "that in cases where there is clear evidence of immigration offence, then we should seek to remove the offender, unless the criminal offence is of a magnitude which would attract a custodial sentence." Later, though, he suggests that even people charged with very serious offences should simply be kicked out.

"In many instances," Mr Salton admits in his memo, "the UKIAS [UK Immigrants' Advisory Service], JCWI [Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants] and associated welfare organisations would continue to protest against early removal, claiming that the offender must be entitled to the full benefits of English justice. However, I believe that the argument that only people lawfully in this country should be thus entitled could be sustained." On past form, Mr Salton's idea has every chance of making it into law, and foreigners on British soil will be further pushed into the shadows of national life.

Meanwhile, the Germans have their Turks; the Kuwaitis have their Filipinos; and the British have their Nigerians. The difference with our guest workers is that we turn them into criminals. ●

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Parliament's decayed

As the parliamentary decade ends under the eye of the TV cameras, Sarah Benton looks at some of the changes they won't be showing

Most backbench Tory MPs have, over their decade of government, enjoyed between three and 20 paid positions with outside companies. Regarded by commerce as the body politic, they happily proffer their insider status as directors, advisers, consultants. Most of the rest are owners of land and property, barristers or members of Lloyds.

The MP who claims no outside interests, like Peter Griffiths of Portsmouth North, is a rare creature. True populists (Mr Griffiths is the man who defeated Patrick Gordon Walker in Smethwick in 1964 in a campaign notorious for the racism it evoked) have a cause. The rest, reluctant to be mere cannon fodder for the whips, have to find one. Being an adviser or consultant may provide that; not to mention the pleasure of the income it yields.

During last year's debate on the Finance Bill, Labour's Nick Brown named 11 Tory MPs who had moved worrying amendments in committee. "It was our concern that it was companies and not constituencies that were being represented at this stage of the Finance Bill," he said. Of course MPs are not trapped in committees all day. The man labelled the brightest of his intake, John Redwood, a previous head of the Prime Minister's policy unit, was chairman of Norcros, a large international firm, until he became a minister. That ate into his time and fed into his pocket.

Though John Redwood is evidently a rich man, having headed Rothschild's privatisation unit before becoming an MP (and after advising the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee on nationalisation), he is one of a new breed of professional Tory politicians. Before the 1960s, MPs entered parliament at a later age. Tories who had not inherited wealth had had time to amass it. Today, the new Tory MP is likely to be in his early thirties. He has to make his money as an MP. As Lord Gowrie mourned when resigning his £33,000 post, even a minister's salary does not pay for the sort of life which a member expects to be his.

Britain's most sedulous watcher of parliament, Andrew Roth of *Parliamentary Profiles*, calls it the end of the "squirearchy" in politics—with an added twist provided by this government. "Thatcherism has done a lot to corrupt the breed of politicians," he says. It has made them "more crudely and aggressively materialistic". He recounts the story of one lobbyist who approached a Tory MEP and was met with the response, "What's in it for me?". If this is the voice of parliament in the 1990s, it's not because individual MPs are more corrupt, but that 1980s politics has made commercial interests a more powerful voice than constituents.

With the social changes there are the new values. Mrs Thatcher has never tired of saying that the gaining of individual wealth is economically necessary (almost a patriotic duty) and morally virtuous. And neither she nor her phalanx of think-tanks have ever uttered a word on the proper conduct of public life. From them, we only learn what politicians should not do (inhibit the gaining of private wealth). The civil service is no longer the ideal incarnate of disinterested public service, but the moribund block to the enterprise culture.

Then there are the powers of patronage. Mrs Thatcher has doled out more knighthoods (82 before the latest round) and peerages (11) to favoured industrialists than any Prime Minister since Lloyd George. Three quarters of those honoured (do they know the meaning of the word?) had given donations to the Tory party, compared with one third of those honoured by Ted Heath.

The drive by the Scottish Office to fill every public position with placemen has done more than anything to alienate the most middle-class of Scots from the hand which, insists Scottish minister Michael Forsyth, has fed it. (Yes, that's the same Mr Forsyth whose former PR firm had as a client Pritchard Services, leading hustler for council cleaning contracts.)

Yet are not British backbench MPs only doing what their East German brothers have done: gaining wealth and social status through

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John Morris

their public office? If their constituents object, they are not saying so. Nor is the body that is supposed to watch over them, the Select Committee on Members' Interests. It has no powerful research team, and with no commanding ideal of how politicians ought to act, what should it be checking?

It has just completed its investigation into the interests of Winchester MP John Browne (who wanted to introduce a bill outlawing press investigation of personal finances). Michael Grylls is next in line. Mr Grylls's posts include the chairmanship of the Trade and Industry Committee, ten directorships and a relationship with the bombastic lobbyists, Ian Greer Associates, which has excited attention.

Although dismissed by some other consultancies for being all noise and no nous, Ian Greer nonetheless has successfully pressed British Airways' claims over Nicholas Ridley's better judgment. He claims to have no MPs on his payroll, but does pay commission if an MP refers business to him. Other MPs, like Sir Marcus Fox, Keith Speed, John Gorst, set up their own PR firms or consultancies. As each consultancy may have many clients (each passing over a good few thousand pounds a year), the income and duties of an MP with one consultancy may exceed those of an MP with a string of directorships.

But the flow of gold which has caused commerce and MPs to rush into headlong embrace comes, first and foremost, from privatisation and deregulation. These have unlocked such a tumble of contracts and clients and commissions that you have to be a Tory of unusually stern moral fibre to let it all flow past. Rolling back the frontiers of the state has created "a boom in consultancies" which has made the 1980s a "lobbyists' paradise", according to Peter Hennessy, author of *Whitehall*.

In the days of corporatism, private firms looked to the CBI (Confederation of British Industry) to put their general case. Now they want particular access to particular forms of deregulated business—or the protection of their monopoly. Large firms have their own public affairs units which maintain the closest liaison with ministers and civil servants. It is the little ones with, says Peter Hennessy, "their Question Time view of how the system works" who are drawn to backbench MPs. The civil service constitutes the remote brain of the system; parliament the seductive, but ultimately helpless, body. If firms want political influence, they are wasting their money on MPs; if they merely want to join the Westminster dance, perhaps they are getting what they're paying for.

We don't know the full financial gains made through privatisation and deregulation, from the billions paid to advertising firms and stockbrokers, through the millions gained by asset-stripping once-public concerns, to the mere thousands which go on commissions for fixing things in one way or another. The intense, and successful, pressure to "liberate" telecommunications enriched the consultancies. A whole new round of the money game has begun as TV franchises go up for auction—following the profitable period of lobbying for the franchises to go to auction. It was the lobbying in the 1950s to open a commercial TV channel which first opened the eyes of commerce and MPs to the possibilities of taking parliament by the hand and leading it towards a licence to print money.

In brief, political time is up for sale. It is no more immune to the drive for wealth and social status than any other area of life. Perhaps less; to be part of the new establishment, your children have to have a more expensive education than state salaries can fund. Is there any evidence that this has actually corrupted public life? The sanguine view is that the civil service, meticulous readers of the Register of Interests and Roth's briefings, protects public life. They spot the venal MP, and appreciate the time saved by a well-informed lobbyist. At worst, they resent the time our taxes pay for which lobbyists consume.

The less sanguine view was put by Keith McDowell, former deputy director of the CBI: eyebrows had been raised, he said, at the way top civil servants "bounce into lucrative jobs in private industry and the City". One firm, Public Policy Consultants, bases its reputation on knowing which civil servants to contact on which issue. All serious lobbyists are eager to get these brains on to their staff, as their greatest asset. How many civil servants, contemplating those City salaries, are happy to display to lobbyists what a "first-class mind" can do to be helpful? Can they always resist the desire to show that they are the sort of chap that the right sort of chap wants on his board of directors?

Yet money is not the only source of corruption. The irresistible allure for so many is the desire to be in the heart of things, in the magic circle where real power lies, where only other important people come.

And corruption is also to do with the absence of any governing impulse to be open and democratic—the sort of impulse which is now propelling eastern Europe out of its dark age. Insofar as civil servants do block the scramble for wealth and influence—a scramble which the impending end of Thatcherism will intensify—they do so in silence. The Official Secrets Act means we will never know what improprieties the civil service has saved us from. Judging by the evidence of Sir Peter Gregson on the Rover sweeteners to the Public Accounts Committee, not much. None of our watchdogs alerted us to that particular misuse of public funds before it was leaked.

Last week, Sir Geoffrey Howe warned the Select Committee on Procedure that if committees pressed civil servants on political issues, and if they even hinted in public that they had confidential material, the government "would feel bound to resist giving access" to information and civil servants.

At the end of the day, the institutions only work as effectively as we citizens make them work. And in our current age of cynicism, of disbelief in the power of politics to usher in a millennium of good government, we seem prepared to turn a blind eye. ●

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The Gandhi method

The ambulance crews are not on strike. They are employing new-style tactics—and even the Sun is on their side. Eileen Fairweather reports

I spent most of last week hurtling around East Sussex with its ambulance crews. Brighton, Peacehaven and Shoreham are hardly hallowed names in labour movement history, yet even here the backing for these workers is overwhelming. At traffic lights motorists bang on ambulance doors to hand over tenners, and when crews answer calls grateful relatives insist on emptying their purses.

What has brought about this solidarity is, above all, the handwritten posters on ambulance windows: "Unpaid, but still working". Since 24 November, East Sussex crews have technically been working unpaid, although management have offered all crews an *ex gratia* payment worth 55 per cent of their earlier wages. East Sussex differs from most other services in that the accident and emergency service is not differentiated in any way from the non A & E.

Although they are not working overtime and some limitations have been put on the use of radios, the crews are continuing to answer all 999 calls, and are following TUC guidelines over the ban on non-emergency work: children, pregnant women, those on renal dialysis, cancer patients on radiotherapy and chemotherapy and the terminally ill are exempted. The army and police haven't been brought in because, says Nupe rep Barry Lister: "The police here are on our side, and we're the best trained paramedics in the country."

While crews in London have had their pay cut off completely since last Friday, the situation over the whole country varies from service to service. In neighbouring Essex, for example, A & E crews are on 75 per cent of their pre-strike salaries and non A & E are unpaid; in Kent, the A & E crews are getting 70 per cent and the non A & E are on 10 per cent.

Funds are pouring in, and not just from other trades unionists. Even my 82-year-old neighbour has called by to ask me where she can hand over her Christmas £10 pensioner's bonus. In Brighton, I watch monks, businessmen and shop stewards rub shoulders as they hand in cash, food, and even a photocopier.

"The government has completely misjudged the mood of the country," says Brighton Nupe rep Chris Ford. "This could be the dispute that brings it down." He could be right, going by the remarks made by those thrusting notes into the buckets: "She's gone too far", "It's our NHS" and "I'll never vote Tory again". "This is a precursor to something else," says 59-year-old engineer Brian Pay, as he hands over his tenner. "Probably privatisation of the ambulance service. She needs to defeat the unions first."

> *'Even my 82-year old neighbour has asked me where she can hand over her Christmas pensioners' bonus'*

But the unions don't want to make this struggle appear like just another trade union strike which damages the public. This is not a "strike" but a "dispute"; there are no shop stewards here, only "reps". Around the country, there are wide variations in levels of industrial action and the TUC has only just called for a national demonstration—on 13 January, some 18 weeks into this dispute. So, instead of calling for old-fashioned solidarity action, the focus is on collecting signatures, pounds and rave reviews in the press.

In East Sussex alone, £75,000 was raised for the hardship fund in just over a week. I focus on some of the weirdest and wackiest examples: the bread brought daily to the Station by monks, the burger bars bearing signs, "Free grub for our ambulance crews". Brighton's five-star Hospitality Inn offered its ballroom for a Christmas party, and Woolworth's donated toys as gifts. It's unusual, it's exhilarating. Only the name of the Grand Hotel makes ambulance staff go grim. When they tried to collect money where they once rescued bombed-out Tories, they were threatened with arrest.

"If even the *Sun* is on our side," someone has scrawled on an incredible up-the-workers article taped to the ambulance station's wall, "then we've won."

But the crews know that while they continue to provide a 999 service, even when they are unpaid, the government can hold out indefinitely, patching up the odd gaps with the police and army. Even in London, where the crews have been regularly "stood down" for not working their radios according to the rules, ambulance stations have continued to answer calls from the central control office put through when the army and police are floundering. They have also responded to requests from the general public, hospital and doctors. A London Weekend Television survey showed that crews in the capital were still dealing with 40 per cent of emergency calls.

So, can ambulance staff stick to what they call "the Gandhi method of protest"? In London, always the front line in this dispute, ambulance stations, against union advice, escalated the action from last Friday and are now boycotting calls from the central control office which is itself now considering a walkout. All 999 calls are being put through to Scotland Yard which controls both its own ambulances and the army's. Crews are continuing to accept calls di-

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Mail Newspapers

'Instead of old-style solidarity, the focus is on collecting signatures, pounds and rave reviews in the press'

rect from the general public, hospitals, doctors—or from Scotland Yard if it can't cope. If Londoners want to make sure of getting a regular ambulance, they should ring the telephone numbers in the box opposite.

In East Sussex, while I'm there, Nupe reps are having to work hard at dissuading crews from an all-out strike. They have just been told that in the last official wage packet they received, they were overpaid by £120; this will have to be repaid. Provocation seems to be the name of the game: only days before crews were told that if they used their vehicles while fund raising they would be arrested for stealing them. But even a visiting SWP member is against an all-out strike. Strangely enough, it's the likes of the young ambulance man who sheepishly admits he voted Tory last time who most needs to be reined in.

The crews certainly seem to be settling in for a long haul. The photocopier, loaned by local Tory businessmen, is kept busy pumping out begging letters to building societies and bank managers. They can keep going, say crews, if the public remembers them once Christmas is over. Talking to some self-confessed cynical old hacks from the tabloids, I sense real shock that not everyone is on £30,000 a year, that for rescuing Norman Tebbit from the sixth floor of the Grand Hotel, old Brian Murray, BEM, takes home just over £8,000 after tax.

Several men spontaneously mention the strain at home, as they're hardly ever there. After work, they're out collecting and going to meetings. One shop steward's wife is expecting their first baby in four weeks time; it is very hard on her, he says, he should be with her at this time.

It will of course be harder still once the baby comes. As the ambulance staff are largely male, what is being done to involve and support the women now singlehandedly shouldering children, housework, their own jobs and the Christmas shopping without money? I do my bit by suggesting to one crewman that they start a wives' support group. "Our wives don't know each other," he protests. But surely this is the point? He begins to perk up and promises to raise it with the disputes committee. A member of it, overhearing, chortles: "I'd like a wives' group. I'd bring all my mistresses along." But then he votes Tory.

But it is hard to see how the whole thing will end. A friend, who over the years has like many of us veered from the far left to today's New Realism, tells me she thinks the TUC daft to call on workers to donate a day's wages per week in solidarity "because it just won't happen. They'll just end up with egg on their face." Yet it was hearing that call which persuaded me, like many others I suspect, to dig far deeper into my own pocket.

Maybe we shouldn't worry that the one-time goliaths of the labour movement, the miners, the engineers, the printers, aren't what they were. Maybe a new-style alliance of trades unionists and pensioners with their Christmas bonuses is where it's at.

At a Sunday afternoon "sponsored ambulance pull", involving slightly tipsy regulars from the Green Dragon dragging "stolen" ambulances on ropes, a young policeman turns a blind eye to the illegally cordoned-off street, and I break the habit of years and buy a copy of *Socialist Worker*. "These days," says the editorial, "everything the Tories do seems to blow up in their face... there has rarely been a better time or better reasons to fight back."

Setting up photographs for this article, I take it upon myself to try to get some kissogram girls, who've been out collecting, to dress only as Mother Christmases.

"No tits?" they ask.

"No tits," I say firmly. "This is for a family newspaper."

Additional research by Vicky Hutchings

Direct lines to London's ambulance stations (by group)

(A) Feltham 01 890 6838 **Isleworth** 01 744 1094 **Twickenham** 01 977 2969; **(B) Greenford** 01 578 1835; **Hayes** 01 573 8230 **Hanwell** 01 566 1399 **Heathrow** 01 897 2526 **Hillingdon** 0895 35655 **Pinner** 01 868 5669 **Ruislip** 08956 75509 **(C) Chiswick** 01 748 3572 **Kenton** 01 204 9162 **Mill Hill** 01 959 0977 **North Kensington** 01 969 3140 **Park Royal** 01 961 3610 **Wembley** 01 903 0067 **Willesden** 01 965 5244 **(D) Barnet** 01 449 2124 **Fortis Green** 01 883 8268 **Friern Barnet** 01 368 7741 **(E) Bloomsbury** 01 837 8869 **Camden** 01 267 1845 **St Johns Wood** 01 262 9606 **(F) Fulham** 01 386 5349 **Westminster** 01 834 4764 **(G) Canonbury** 01 226 6346 **Dalston** 01 985 4634 **Hackney** 01 986 4003 **Shoreditch** 01 729 5273 **Smithfield** 01 248 2631 **(H) Bounds Green** 01 888 4868 **Chase Farm** 01 367 5760 **Edmonton** 01 884 3497 **Ponders End** 01 363 1678 **Tottenham** 01 802 7922 **(J) Buckhurst Hill** 01 505 0753 **Poplar** 01 790 0834 **West Ham** 01 552 2283 **Whipps Cross** 01 558 7213 **(K) Becontree** 01 593 7053 **Hornchurch** 04024 74674 **Ilford** 01 599 7946 **Newham** 01 471 6077 **Romford** 0708 33985 **(L) Barnhurst** 0322 58509 **Greenwich** 01 856 5098 **Mottingham** 01 850 8436 **St Pauls Cray** 01 302 5135 **Woolwich** 01 316 6552 **(M) Beckenham** 01 658 5967 **Bromley** 01 313 0467 **Croydon** 01 656 0093 **New Addington** 0689 41191 **(N) Deptford** 01 639 4087 **Forest Hill** 01 699 5036 **Lee** 01 852 3632 **Rotherhithe** 01 231 1655 **Waterloo** 01 928 7103 **(P) Purley** 01 660 8498 **South Croydon** 01 688 3406 **Streatham** 01 769 4832 **(Q) Battersea** 01 223 9189 **Brixton** 01 274 6003 **Oval** 01 735 2576 **Putney** 01 874 5524 **(R) St Helier** 01 640 2552 **Sutton** 01 643 1160 **Wimbledon** 01 879 1465 **(S) Malden** 01 336 1157 **Richmond** 01 332 1295 **Tolworth** 01 390 7178.

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Blood ties

Even the Labour Party is to abandon the closed shop. David Metcalf visits Smithfield's old stalwarts

David Hoffman

Smithfield at 5.30am, the largest dead meat market in the world. These are the busiest weeks of a year in which some 150,000 tons of meat have passed through. The first hall is pure red meat: beef and pig carcasses hang in rows, red and pink, layered with white fat. The central aisle and avenues off it are crowded with men, almost all white and middle-aged, shifting dead meat in a hurry. There's a bit of banter, but not much. It's hard sweaty work—and bloody. Some men are splattered with blood, others caked in it.

Men in blue smocks pull trolleys of moist, cold meat. Others haul slabs of meat, half a ton at a time, on heavy wooden carts with no brakes or gears. Along the aisles, men hacksaw pig carcasses, weighing up to 200lb, into lumps. Other men are carrying pork and beef loads between the stalls and the vans and lorries parked all round the hall. They wear white overalls, and you can tell them in the café later because their right shoulders and hips are red with blood.

Outside, Mick is "pulling in" a load of pigs' heads: well, not exactly pulling in, just grabbing a clammy ear and slinging each head into the back of the Transit. He's working from a trolley piled high with 200 heads, about 11lb each, the severed necks still livid. The piles of heads are about 15 deep, the heads squashed, almost gelled together by fluids.

Here at Smithfield, the Transport and General Workers Union operates the ultimate pre-entry closed shop to which all these workers belong: self-employed as well as employees. The union is fragmented and has no central control. There are a dozen occupational categories—shunters, sellers, porters, pullers-back, pitchers, shopmen—yet all but one are engaged in the movement of meat: and for one group of workers—self-employed porters called bummarees—occupational licencing adds a further layer on top of the closed shop.

The closed shop is doubly under threat. The Corporation of the City of London, which owns

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Rates of pay are high, but the jobs involve strenuous physical effort and the unpleasantness of carrying cold and bloody carcasses

the Smithfield site, has threatened to close the market unless labour relations are changed; and the government intends to outlaw all pre-entry closed shops by next year. Smithfield is specifically mentioned in the Department of Employment as a type of closed shop which boosts pay, lowers productivity and profits, and results in lower employment. These claims are, as we shall see, not all borne out.

An official investigation in 1969 stated: "We met many men among both employers and workers, who had been in the market for up to 40 years or more and whose family connections went back much further. These long associations have doubtless much to do with the strong affection for the market which is characteristic of many people who work or buy there. This characteristic should not be undervalued." This longevity of association and fond attachment still holds true today. I spoke to more than 50 people while doing this study and most were devoted to the market.

The operations I've described are straightforward in theory but, to an ousider, intricate in practice. Meat arrives at the market by lorry in the early hours from abattoirs and farms. The meat trucks are placed on the appropriate gate by shunters and then the meat is transferred into the market shops by pullers-back and pitchers. The men work in gangs. They are self-employed and self-regulating. Beef sides and quarters and pigs are normally carried on the shoulder, while lambs and cartons are taken on the hand-trucks.

Once the meat is pitched, wholesalers cut, weigh and display it. Buying starts at 5am. The shopmens' occupations—checkers, night men, humpers, cutters, scalesmen, deliverymen and offal boys—are all tightly defined and strictly demarcated. The meat bought by butchers and caterers is mostly carried out of the market by the bummarees, who are licenced by the Market Superintendent.

All these workers are members of the Smithfield branch (1/270) of the TGWU. Twenty years ago an official report described Smithfield as "a picture of antique working practices, fragmented industrial relations, irrational pay structures and uneven working conditions". Nothing much has changed since. This suggests that the system, while a bit creaky, probably works rather well.

The TGWU monopoly and the peculiar working practices have their origin in the period of rationing following the war up to 1954. The formal agreement between the TGWU and the Market Tenants Association does *not* state that all labour in the market must be done by TGWU members. But, in practice, Smithfield is a pre-entry closed shop.

A youngster, aged 16, typically starts work in the poultry market, or as an offal boy in the meat market where the work is lighter. He will be taught "the ways of the market". Often he is the son or another relative of an existing market worker. The teenager will immediately be signed up by the TGWU. Vacant adult jobs are allocated at 8am on Tuesdays by the Smithfield TGWU labour sub-committee. This committee

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consists solely of representatives of different Smithfield occupations and *excludes* the TGWU wholesale markets official who looks after members' interests in all the London wholesale markets.

When a wholesaler wants to take on a new shopman he approaches the TGWU. If the wholesaler recruited independently of the TGWU, no meat would get pitched into his shop. An amazingly plush suite of shops and offices in Smithfield is owned by Allied Meat Importers, which sells meat from Botswana. But two years ago its boss refused to accept the shopmen allocated by the TGWU. The TGWU, unusually, refused in turn to supply an alternative. So for the past two years Allied's shop has had no meat to sell. It uses Smithfield simply to take phone orders which are then supplied from its depot six miles away in the London suburbs.

The pre-eminent activities in the market are the self-employed jobs. When the TGWU determines there is a vacancy in the pulling-back, pitching or bummaree occupations, it is filled from the waiting list of employed shopmen.

Strict job demarcations, collectively enforced, are the key to TGWU power. Action by one small group—say the 20 pullers-back who pull the meat to the back of the lorry—can bring the market to a halt. By contrast, collective action by wholesalers or customers against the workforce is almost unheard of. Occasionally, a maverick driver, wholesaler or butcher has challenged the work customs. For example, a butcher would be taken to one side "to have the customs of the market explained to him". Such affronts to the closed shop have always failed, because the tenants and customers are either too feeble, or too pragmatic, to act collectively.

The TGWU steward and members justify the closed shop on several grounds. Tiny Sylvester, chairman of the Smithfield branch, is disarmingly honest: "self-interest—the same as barristers and solicitors." Discipline and control were frequently mentioned, with youngsters learning "the ways of the market". The self-employed element also provides risk sharing—the wholesalers only pay out for meat that is moved. If supplies of meat fall, their wages fall too. The closed shop is also seen as a block on a return to the casual hiring practices that existed before the second world war—the same argument advanced by the TGWU in its unsuccessful attempt to retain the National Dock Labour Scheme.

Smithfield workers are lucky too. Meat is perishable, it is difficult to substitute capital for labour and labour costs are a minute fraction of the price of meat. Periodically pullers-back deem a load "unsafe" and demand double payment. It might be unsafe because the parked lorry had a wheel on the curb and is therefore at a slight angle! Unless the wholesaler is prepared not to have his meat pitched, he is likely to acquiesce to the suggestion of compensation for the dangerous load.

Fork-lift trucks are used in the poultry market (built in the 1960s to replace the old poultry market destroyed in a fire) but the aisles are too narrow and the bustle too great to permit their use in the main meat market. This TGWU power translates into higher pay for the self-employed and lower productivity among shopmen, but the government's other recent

When a man's job falls vacant, Smithfield's TGWU labour sub-committee allocates a replacement

claims that closed shops trim profits and cost jobs are more doubtful in the case of Smithfield.

Pitchers and pullers-back state that they earn, at a minimum, £250 for four nights (20 hours' work). The corresponding hourly rate is treble the British male manual average pay. But some of this premium compensates for the demanding physical effort, the inherent unpleasantness of carrying cold or bloody carcasses, the greater risk of injury and the unsocial hours. Both the market superintendent and the TGWU wholesale markets official expressed scepticism about the £250 figure. They both suggest that £400 is nearer the mark. But it is all a bit of a mystery, because no one knows how many pitchers there really are and how many nights they work. The superintendent suggests 40 full-time equivalents, but the men themselves put the figure much higher. Obviously a given pool of pay shared among more men reduces the wages of such men.

Job controls exercised by pullers-back and pitchers feed into the pay-effort bargain. Split loads present opportunities. After one portion (perhaps carcasses) has been unloaded, the wholesaler buying the other portion (say cased meat) in another part of the market might be told he will have to wait, sometimes even "till the day pitchers come on". An enhanced rate tends to shorten the waiting period considerably.

Bummarees work incredibly hard, pulling loads of meat on the hand-carts for three hours from 5am. They probably earn more than pitchers—as testified by the long waiting list to become a bummaree.

Shopmen are employees and earn less than their self-employed colleagues. The main effect of the closed shop on shopmen concerns their strict job demarcations. Recently, though, these have been eroded. When one shopman leaves, the remaining workers may agree to do his work and share his pay.

Profits are low at present throughout the wholesale meat trade. There is no strong evidence that Smithfield wholesalers have, consequent on the pre-entry closed shop, lower profits than elsewhere. Also, some are run idiosyncratically. Earlier this year the *Financial Times* likened the machinations of one firm trading in the vicinity of Smithfield to the *Dallas* saga: "The combination of a boardroom split, complex family allegiances, unlocked property potential and a call for the removal of a director by a large City institution is the stuff which scriptwriters might drool at."

There are now only about 700 manual jobs in the market, two-thirds fewer than 25 years ago. It seems unlikely that the closed shop contributed all that much to this decline. Rather, tonnage has fallen because of the changed nature of the trade—fewer imports, retail butchers losing out to supermarkets, the growth of cased meat. The ebbing of Smithfield will diminish the closed shop, rather than vice versa.

The survival of this closed shop—surely previously the strongest in Britain, if not the world—is now in doubt. Reduced tonnage is one threat, but there are others. The law concerning the pre-entry closed shop will be changed next year and hygiene regulations from Brussels are, indirectly, even more ominous.

The City of London has only agreed to refurbish the market to bring it up to the required European standard if work practices are changed. The TGWU has come to a provisional agreement with the tenants which would, essentially, do away with self-employed pullers-back and pitchers. That agreement is on ice because of escalating renovation costs. Cynics have suggested that the City would rather like to close the market—office rents nearby are nearly ten times greater per square foot than the return received from the tenants.

In 1990, it will become illegal to discriminate against a non-unionist in hiring. So if a wholesaler decides to hire a non-union workforce, the law will be on his side; and if the TGWU refuses to pitch the meat for that wholesaler, the union can be sued already under a law passed last year. But Smithfield is a community with strong traditions and norms. It will be surprising if the TGWU does not still have a pivotal role at the end of the century, albeit with different work practices. ●

Additional reporting by Robert Crampton

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Andrzej Krauze

Spy in the sky

Zircon, the controversial British spy satellite, may now be eavesdropping on the Soviet Union. Duncan Campbell reports

The controversial and costly British spy satellite, originally known as Zircon, is in orbit—according to American space experts. They say it is likely to be one of two electronic eavesdropping satellites secretly launched by the United States over the past three months. The British and US governments refuse to comment on the launches. One satellite went up by Titan launcher on 4 September, the second by the space shuttle Discovery on 23 November. In each case, the satellites were described by the US Department of Defence merely as classified defence payloads.

The Ministry of Defence press office said last week: "We have no comment to make on these launches." But US intelligence satellite experts, including Dr John Pike of the Federation of American Scientists and Dr Jeff Richelson of the National Security Archives, Washington DC, say the mysterious 4 September launch was likely to have been the British spy satellite. "It doesn't fit any US programme."

The satellite's function, when in orbit, is to unfold a gigantic mesh receiving dish. The satellite orbits in an apparently fixed position over the Seychelles. From here, virtually the entire Soviet Union, as well as all of eastern Europe, is in the electronic view of the listening dish. Elaborate computer procedures are necessary to keep the satellite on station and to process the signals received. Zircon's ground receiving and control computer complex, codenamed Irgano, is said to have cost £150 million alone.

Several features make the 4 September launch one of the most secretive ever carried out by the US. The satellite was launched under cover of darkness at 1.54am on US Labour Day. Labour Day is a national holiday and the timing ensured the US media took little interest. The launcher, a Titan 34-D, is used only for the heaviest payloads not carried by the space shuttle, indicating the satellite would be heavy and have an important military purpose.

The specialists noted it would be difficult to conceal the presence of a British team of specialists at Cape Canaveral to prepare for and monitor the launching and orbital manoeuvring of Zircon. Conveniently, however, the 4 September launch coincided closely with the launch of a civilian space probe, Marco Polo, with which many British scientists were involved. This could have assisted in providing "cover" for the British Zircon experts. The Zircon electronic eavesdropping ("sigint") satellite is a new project for Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Cheltenham. Its existence was first revealed by *New Statesman* in January 1987, after the government successfully urged the BBC to ban transmission of a BBC2 *Secret Society* programme. The programme revealed how the government had hidden the project from Parliament and the Public Accounts Committee.

Following delays and uncertainties, Zircon is likely to have cost considerably more than the £500 million originally budgeted. The funds required have been concealed in the costs of the Trident missile system. According to a former senior Ministry of Defence adviser, Zircon's costs are actually 5 per cent of the costs of the Trident nuclear programme.

Angered by the Zircon revelation, the Prime Minister ordered successive raids on reporters' homes, the *New Statesman* offices, and finally the seizure of films and tapes from BBC Scotland. After a public outcry, the material was handed back to the BBC who were eventually allowed to transmit the programme in September 1988.

At the time of the 1987 raids and parliamentary debates, the government claimed no decision had been taken to go ahead with Zircon. But this was contradicted by evidence that new factory facilities to build the satellite had been constructed. Government sources also claimed the project had been funded and approved outside normal Defence Ministry procedures.

Six months later, a leaked report in the *Times* claimed the Zircon project had been scrapped. The *Times* information was never confirmed, although several defence sources think it may have marked a decision to abandon the idea of producing an all-British electronic spy satellite and to purchase an off-the-shelf US version instead. Previously, GCHQ has worked extensively on US-provided satellite sigint data both in Cheltenham and at the giant US spy base at Menwith Hill, Yorkshire. At Menwith Hill, about 300 GCHQ staff assist a much larger US contingent to process intercepts from satellites Argus, Vortex and Chalet. Another satellite programme run from Menwith Hill is code-lettered YI.

A similar base at Bad Aibling, West Germany receives data from the latest US electronic spy satellite, Magnum. November's space shuttle launch carried Magnum, the second of America's new generation of listening satellites. Like the Titan rocket thought to have lofted Zircon, the Discovery shuttle took off without TV publicity and under cover of darkness. ●

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Cuban Fidelity

In 1968 Castro supported Dubcek; now he sees Havel as a counterrevolutionary. George Black on Cuba's "fossil Marxist"

Of all the hundreds of speechs that Fidel Castro has delivered over the past 31 years, few have been of such singular interest as his funeral oration on 7 December for the 2,289 Cubans (the number is now official) killed in Angola and other wars.

The speech has provoked a torrent of commentary, most of which can be summed up in the *New York Times*'s view of Castro as a "fossil Marxist", to be lumped together with Kim Il Sung, Nicolae Ceausescu and whoever runs Albania these days.

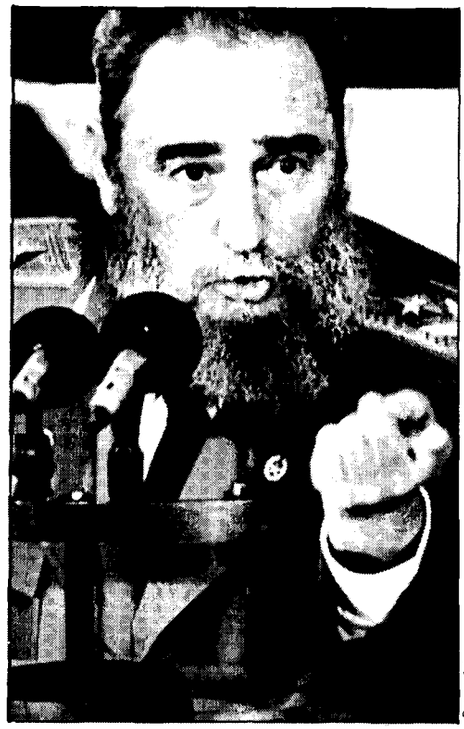
Certainly what resonates in the speech is the depth of Castro's contempt for what is happening in eastern Europe. On the surface the tone is reminiscent of Erich Honecker's 40th anniversary speech. That was the one that likened East German communism to "the steadily turning sails of a windmill", against which the imperialist enemy would dash itself in the style of Don Quixote.

Well, we all know what happened to Erich Honecker. By the time of the Havana speech, the East German gerontocrat was already gone. So were Todor Zhivkov and Milos Jakes and their whole wretched crew. But Castro isn't Honecker.

To Castro, the main lesson to be drawn from this seems to have been that Honecker underestimated the enemy. The crisis in the socialist bloc, Castro explained, was the result of a long-term imperialist strategy of undermining socialism from within, compounded by "some errors that may have been committed" (a nice use of the passive subjunctive, which leaves open the question of culpability).

But Castro is also different from Honecker in more significant ways. As a Latin American, he devoted an important part of his speech to a passionate denunciation of the conditions in which the countries of the third world are submerged. Miami-style capitalism is regarded by Castro, with considerable justification, as a moral cesspool.

It is also founded, he believes, on the sustained rape of the South, with only the forms of exploitation shifting, from the *conquistadores* through slavery to the more gentlemanly, remote-controlled carnage of the IMF. It is impossible not to sympathise with that portion of his speech. And without it, there is no way of grasping the vehemence of his rejectionism and his sense of isolation. Leonid Brezhnev, wicked old scoundrel though he was, at least behaved as if the third world mattered, even if he was keener to ply it with guns than with butter. Mikhail Gorbachev's attention is directed towards issued elsewhere.



Popperfoto

For Castro, the Malta summit made Moscow a partner in the pillage of the third world

If there is a consensus in Moscow on anything these days, it is that states like Cuba are a tiresome drain on Soviet resources. Castro's speech was quite candid about why he decided, in August, to ban the Soviet magazines *Sputnik* and *Moscow News*: because they had carried stories that proposed revising the terms of Soviet-Cuban trade. Soviet friendship is worth $5 billion a year to Cuba. To some this is an artificial subsidy; to the Cubans it is an equitable alternative to blind laws of the market. For Castro, the Malta summit was an act of superpower collusion that will make Moscow a junior partner in the pillage of the third world.

Since the 1960s, Cuba's revolutionary order has been built on the assumption of a fixed compass in the Soviet bloc. The instruments that Brezhnev's Kremlin gave Cuba to defend itself were a massive security apparatus, a command economy and a neo-Stalinist political model. But the world has changed, and that model now shows signs of strain in Cuba as well as in eastern Europe, and for much the same reasons.

The island was shaken last summer by its most serious political crisis in years. Four officials were executed for corruption, including General Arnaldo Ochoa, a Hero of the Republic (there are only five). The powerful Minister of the Interior, General José Abrantes, was sentenced to 20 years in jail for abuse of power. A secret department of the Interior Ministry, set up to evade the US economic embargo, was found to have been used for drug trafficking. And a number of senior officials were purged amid tales of wild parties, sex with teenage girls and general "dissipation".

But in Cuba, only the party will judge the party. "Without a strong, disciplined and respected party, it is impossible to develop a truly socialist revolution," Castro said in Havana. "It is not possible to carry out such a process by insulting socialism, destroying its values, discrediting the party, demoralising the vanguard, renouncing its leading role." Of course, party power in eastern Europe was implanted by the Red Army; the legitimacy of the Cuban Revolution is much greater. Yet Castro's remarks go well beyond a comment on Cuba's particular situation: they are a general defence of the most problematic aspects inherent in Marxist-Leninist dogma.

More than 20 years ago, Czechoslovak intellectuals of the Prague Spring welcomed Cuba for its freshness. After Che Guevara's death in Bolivia, the screenwriter Jiri Mucha wrote, "Without men like Che, there would be no more hope left." Castro supported Alexander Dubcek on the principle of independence, if not on matters of substance, and swallowed the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia as a bitter medicine. Today, the most depressing comment on the blind alley in which cold war history has stranded Cuba is that Fidel Castro should look at figures of the stature of Christa Wolf or Vaclav Hável and see them as nothing more than the vulgar agents of a counterrevolutionary conspiracy.

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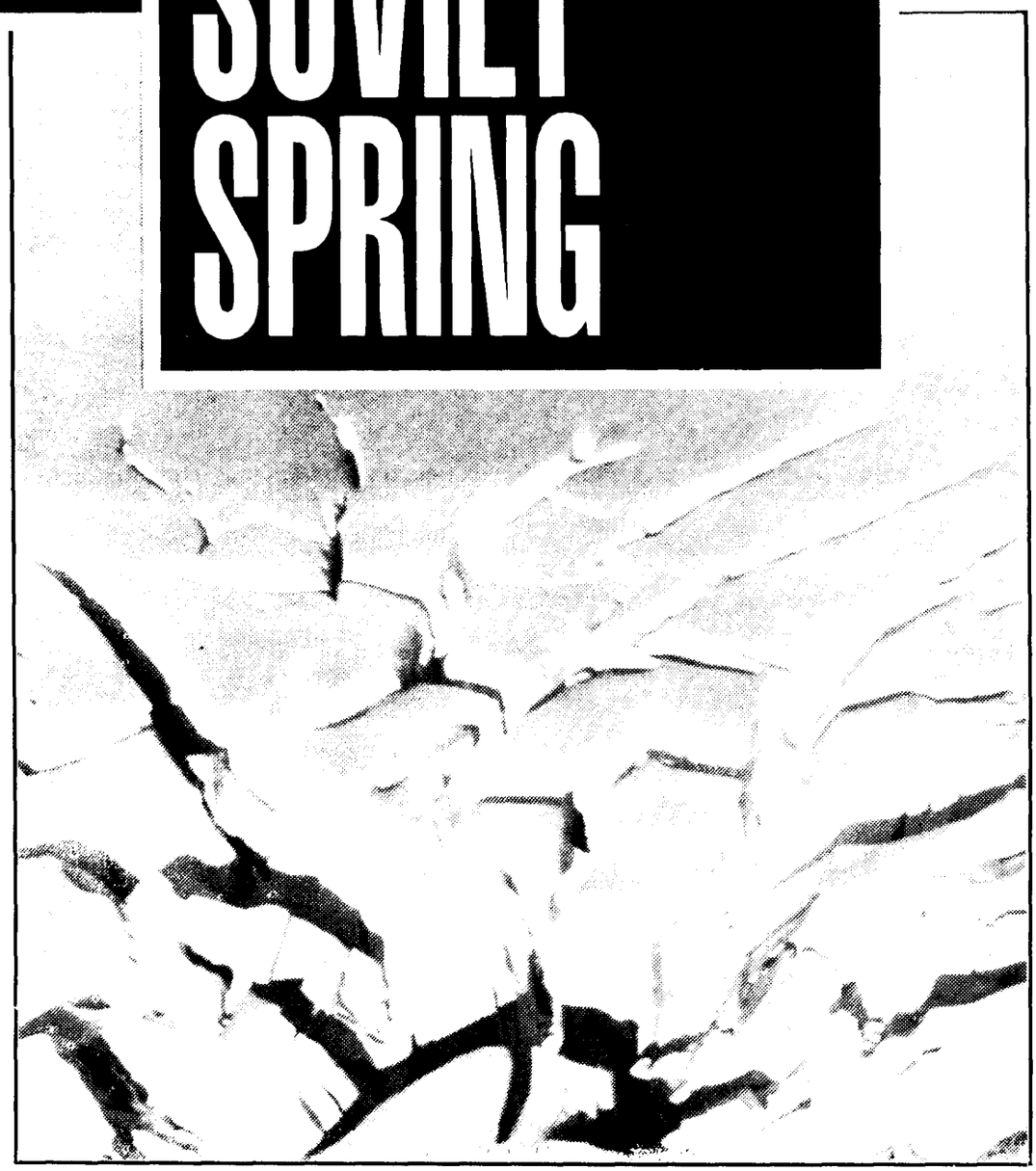
СОВЕТСКАЯ ВЕСНА

SOVIET SPRING



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Not in our backyard

Alexander Cockburn visits the striking miners of Pittston, forgotten by the East Coast media

Minneapolis

I spent a bit of Thanksgiving weekend, late in November, at Camp Solidarity, set up next to the river Clinch near the town of Lebanon in south-west Virginia by the striking miners of the Pittston Coal Group. This was about the time that President Bush, warming up for the Malta summit, was boosting western values of free speech and democracy. The Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa had just been given an exuberant welcome by the president and by Congress.

About 1,900 members of the United Mine Workers have been on strike against Pittston since 5 April, having worked without a contract for several months before that. The rest of the coal companies in the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association had signed this same contract sought by the miners but Pittston, run by Paul Douglas—son of a famous US politician of an earlier era—is clearly out to break the union. Pittston is trying to take back health benefits, retirees' health cards, overtime and vacation benefits. The company has tried to insist that it isn't, but miners don't decide to live on strike pay for eight months for frivolous reasons.

At first the strike received some media coverage, but then the national press largely lost interest. Network crews and reporters spent enormous sums of money to cover strikes by Soviet miners, but five hours from Washington DC American miners waited vainly for the big guns of the press to show.

It wasn't as though there was a shortage of dramatic incident. At about 4pm on 17 September, two haulage trucks drove up the road to Pittston's Moss 3 coal-preparation plant and disgorged 98 striking miners who promptly occupied the plant. It was a tense situation. The governor of Virginia, Gerald Bailes, sent increasing numbers of state police into the area.

By 7pm on 20 September, 75 hours into the occupation, a US district judge had ordered the miners to vacate the plant and 5,000 supporters were ranged around Moss 3. At 9pm the occupiers marched out and melted into the crowd. For nearly four days Pittston's operations in south-west Virginia had been at a standstill.

Such scenes in the Soviet Union or Poland sent network executives scurrying to book costly satellite time to relay back the dramatic pictures. It was the first occupation of this sort in the US since 1937, but nonetheless one ignored by ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN and Headline News. AP and UPI carried nothing on their national wires for two days. Nothing ran in the major papers until the *Washington Post* picked up an AP story on 19 September. The *Wall Street Journal* opened its coverage with three sentences in a story one day later.

A couple of weeks before I visited Camp Solidarity, Jackie Stump, district president of the region's mineworkers, had won a victory that once again offered an opportunity for dramatic coverage by a press hoarse with reporting "revolt from below" in eastern Europe.

Before the election on 7 November, the local member of Virginia's House of Delegates was Donald McGlothlin Sr, a 20-year veteran of the statehouse and father of circuit court judge Donald McGlothlin Jr, who had fined the union $30 million for strike activities. The miners thought McGlothlin Sr should have been doing more than announcing his neutrality in the dispute. Three weeks before the election, Stump announced he would run as a write-in candidate (a late runner whose name is not on the ballot paper and has to be written in). He won by a margin of two to one. When a Klansman triumphed in a race for the Louisiana statehouse the press rushed to New Orleans. Stump's write-in victory, virtually unprecedented in US political history, drew scant attention.

In the canteen of Camp Solidarity, a stoutly built and well warmed structure raised by miners on land owned by a UMWA member, I talked to James Hicks, president of the local union. Hicks, a 42-year-old Vietnam veteran, said about 50,000 supporters of the miners had stopped off at the camp at various times since it was set up in midsummer. He'd been interviewed by journalists from Australia, Europe and the Soviet Union, and was having a hard time trying to figure out why US miners on strike for eight months had become virtually "off limits" to the national press and TV networks.

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Miners in revolt: left, keeping vigil outside the mine and, above, a refusal to serve state police at a truck store

Later, I drove a few miles to a motel in the town of Coeburn (which sports signs saying it's Virginia's tidiest town, I was pleased to note) and next morning picked up the Sunday edition of the *Washington Post* which carried a story about the strike, but not a single quote from a striking miner. Like most US newspapers, the *Washington Post* has time for striking miners so long as they are the far side of what used to be called the Iron Curtain.

I headed up towards Philadelphia. The newspapers and TV screens were filled with images of ecstatic East Berliners shopping in the west, also of Czechs mustered to face their masters. The airwaves and opinion columns were flush with paeans to the victory of western values, while simultaneously supplying news of Jesuits murdered by US-supplied Salvadorean government soldiers. These soldiers were rewarded for their barbarous slayings by fresh infusions of cash from the US government.

As with the miners' strike you'd think from the networks and from newspapers like the *New York Times, Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* that national reaction to the slaying of the Jesuits had been in line with White House support for the d'Aubuisson regime nominally headed by Alfredo Cristiani. But outside the beltways surrounding New York and Washington's media baronies, the sentiment is markedly different.

I travelled from Philadelphia to Boston to Madison to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St Paul. The *Philadelphia Inquirer*'s lead editorial for 27 November called US policy towards El Salvador a "duplicitous charade" and said that if one looked back at slain Archbishop Romero's advice to Jimmy Carter nine years ago not to give US aid, it was difficult to conceive that El Salvador would be worse off today if Washington had heeded the Archbishop's advice.

A *Boston Globe* editorial for 1 December concluded that "the best approach for the US is to get out unilaterally, without trying to mastermind the war". Madison's *Capital Times* had already determined in an editorial for 18 November that, although the Bush administration was speeding up military aid to the government, "the dead priests had a better idea: forge a government that includes the rebels instead of continuing a war that brings only more and more death". The *St Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch* said in its lead editorial of 29 November that the failure of the Reagan-Bush policy had become "painfully evident".

What about popular reaction here to US policy in El Salvador? You wouldn't know it from the networks which send teams prowling the backstreets of Leipzig in search of dissent, but between 13 November and 1 December, the organisation National Pledge of Resistance tallied 195 demonstrations, including occupations, blockades of federal buildings and, in the case of Seattle, blocking of Interstate 5 by protesters.

Most US newspapers have time for striking miners so long as they are on the far side of the 'Iron Curtain'

The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador counts 400 protests since 11 November and reckons it's the largest such wave opposing US policy since Vietnam.

The day I arrived in Minneapolis a committee of the city council was considering a motion—reckoned virtually certain of passage by the council and approved by Mayor Jon Fraser—barring the City of Minneapolis from retaining the powerful law firm of O'Connor and Hannan from any new services until it is no longer employed by Cristiani, ARENA (Nationalist Republican Alliance) or "any other entity involved in the repression of El Salvador". This law firm has registered as an agent under retainer for Cristiani.

Under TV lights in the crowded city council chamber, some witnesses recounted to council members the atrocities wrought by the ARENA government. Legal witnesses rejected O'Connor and Hannan's defence that it was merely fulfilling the duty of providing a client with proper legal representation. Indeed it seems O'Connor and Hannan have been lobbyists, providing services such as choreographing a Cristiani visit to Washington; and company partner Joseph Blatchford, who handles the Cristiani account, drafted a column for the *New York Times* which appeared under Cristiani's name.

As the testimony wound towards evening on 6 December, council member Walt Dziedzic intervened. In the past, Dziedzic said, he'd been opposed to council interventions into the realm of foreign policy. He'd been a policeman who had grown up in working-class north-east Minneapolis. He remembered the work there of nuns like the church women murdered by a Salvadorean right-wing death squad. "Now," said Dziedzic to a hushed chamber, "I've gone full circle from cop to protester. I'm not proud of myself for sitting silent on El Salvador. I sat silent till the Jesuits were murdered and I'm not going to sit silent any more."

Amid cheers Dziedzic said he supported the motion to break city ties with O'Connor and Hannan until the firm gave up working for Cristiani. Listening to Dziedzic I felt the same way as I had after talking to Hicks in Virginia. Here were a Vietnam Vet and a cop, part of the vast spectrum of voices mostly caricatured as "the silent majority" who want justice of a kind unappetising to Bush and the claque of press people around him who chirped about democratic values in Malta, while blind to the realities of south-west Virginia or El Salvador. ●

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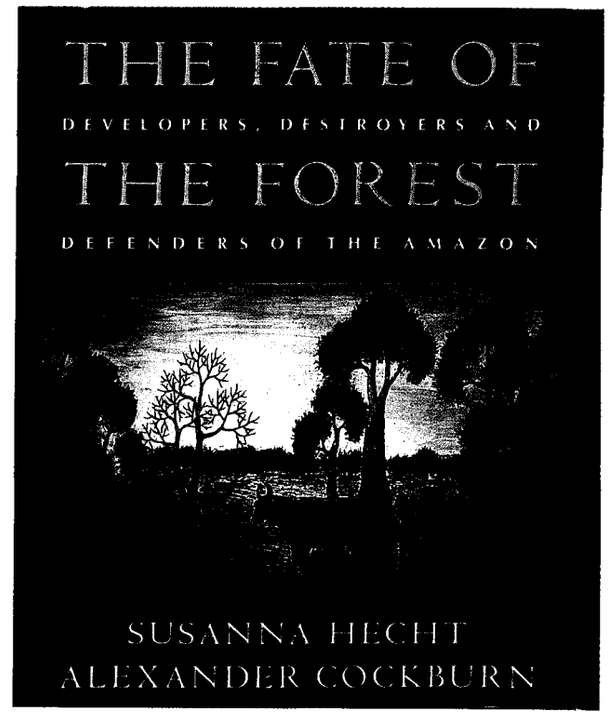

The Fate of the Forest is the result of more than ten years' research by ecologist Susannah Hecht and radical journalist Alexander Cockburn, a regular contributor to *NSS*. They have written a detailed examination of the continuing destruction of the rainforests of the Brazilian Amazon—one third of the world's total.

Oliver Rackman wrote in his review for our books pages on 8 December 1989: "Their argument—and it is persuasive—puts the blame on a quite small number of people, non-Amazonian Brazilians and a few foreigners... Their motives were old-fashioned: greed, ignorant optimism, forgetting past failures and thus repeating them."

The scope of the book is vast. Hecht and Cockburn cover the politics, history, anthropology, economics and biology of the region from the origins of the plant and animal life, through the gold fever of the conquistadores, to present day exploiters.

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Free man

Andrei Sakharov was a beacon of light in dark times. Here he is remembered

Agnes Heller

With his funeral still vivid in the mind, one can only think with irritation of the pettiness of today's philosophy when compared with the greatness of the man who has just left us. Philosophy has been for some time loudly complaining about, or proudly announcing, "the death of the subject" while a man was living among us who has wrought crucial changes on his gigantic country almost single-handedly. If one needs an example of the emblematic personality, one should think of Andrei Sakharov.

Sakharov's road to political life was not the expected one, nor could it have been predicted from his early curriculum vitae. He first took the road through his moral actions as a scientist. The brilliant and ardently patriotic young nuclear physicist, who had helped his country develop the hydrogen bomb, and who had been the protected, even spoilt, favourite of Stalin's *nomenklatura*, all of a sudden, in the brainstorm of a day, envisioned the horrific destructive potentials of his discovery. Without hesitation, Sakharov rushed to Khrushchev and begged him to abandon all experiments with the terrible weapon.

Initially, the gesture had no direct political relevance. But it did have a distinguished place in the *moral* history of science. For it was the deed of an anti-Galileo. Sakharov fearlessly took to task the unrestrained use of science regardless of its consequences in the name of humanity and the moral law. And he did so increasingly in public statements, not just in internal spiritual torment, putting at risk his status as a scientist, indeed his whole existence, by the challenge.

The public statement of his moral objection, and the ensuing conflicts, gradually transformed the politically indifferent Sakharov into the spokesman of his suffering country. The exile in Gorky, together with the expelled Solzhenytsin, was the most visible symbol of the resistance—incarcerated in camps and prisons—to Brezhnev's oppressive, corrupt and imperialist rule. But Andrei Sakharov was a very peculiar, almost a Kantian, type of the political actor, a man become politician out of purely moral motives. For until he willingly took upon himself the wrath of his omnipotent masters, Sakharov had had no private or collective grievance. What he later did, he did only on the instigation of his own conscience.

This is why Sakharov appeared as the representative example of the conscientious objector as political actor in the postwar world of global conflicts. His intransigence could be, and indeed was, read as if he had been inciting others to civil disobedience. If he did, this was an "as if", a merely hypothetical political gesture, because around Sakharov, there was no civil society capable of disobedience in the Soviet Union. But the representative conscientious objector, the Kantian public figure, did more than almost anyone else to awaken civil society in his slumbering and terrorised country.

Two moral features raised this unprecedented gesture to the level of a moral-political masterpiece. Sakharov deliberately resigned the role of the prophet and there was not the slightest trace of misanthropy in him while he was surrounded by betrayals, ignominy and indignities.

It is more than the usual exaggeration of obituaries, it is the simple truth, that Sakharov was the litmus test of Gorbachev's earnestness as the man of change. Only when Sakharov was released from internal exile did we begin to believe, slowly and hesitantly at first, that the new ruler might be the herald of a new epoch, not just an accomplished master of the usual windowdressing. Sakharov, who always acted impersonally in politics, interpreted the change in his political fortunes in a similarly impersonal way; not as a sentimental, but as a symbolic decision ushering in the era of reform.

Sakharov was the paradigm of the free man who was never determined by his past

Network

Only considering what he regarded as his public duty, he appealed to his fellow conscientious objectors to join *perestroika* and *glasnost* unconditionally. As Sakharov later came to see, this was a too generous latitude granted to Gorbachev. In fact, it was an error of judgment.

The process of transformation needed independent critics, not zealots. But Andrei Sakharov was the paradigm of the free man who was never determined by his past. His humiliating exile did not blind him to the fact of change, nor did his initial overzealousness for a constructive attitude prevent him from becoming the ever more outspoken critic of Gorbachev's inconsistencies, literally till his dying hour.

Sakharov's life ended in the limelight, with a classic curtain fall. After challenging Gorbachev on the issue of the constitutional prerogative of the party, Sakharov went home and collapsed of a heart-attack.

Around his catafalque, people now sob, call themselves orphans, beg for his forgiveness, in the exuberant manner of a great culture which has many flaws but whose core has never become one-dimensional. And yet, the mourners are in error when they bid adieu to the saint of Russia. And the error has to be corrected, for it would be important to Andrei Sakharov himself, were he still with us.

He once remarked, with the simple but profound gesture of the rationalist stoic: I was free even in Gorky. In the spirit of modern and active stoicism, Sakharov's internal freedom did not remain confined to his proud soul but has been translated into public acts of emancipation. It is his last will and testament. The bell tolls for the freest man in Russia, in the hope of the coming freedom of all his fellow citizens.

Agnes Heller was a pupil and colleague of Georg Lukacs, the great Marxist writer. She left Hungary in 1973, and is now Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research in New York. "A Philosophy of Morals" will be published in March 1990. She is currently working on a book on the deconstruction of eastern Europe since 1945.

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Trouble in paradise

Do we love the flexi-working, high-tech, heavy-shopping, home-centred Britain that a decade of market forces has made? Around the country, NSS writers have seen the future and it works—part- time

Steve Peray and Harriet Lamb

Fog on the Tyne

Steve Percy and Harriet Lamb shop till they drop in Gateshead

Lost, we wandered into dense jungle. Another couple were searching the coliseum: "We didn't come in through those trees," he groaned. We accosted a security guard watching penguins flap their wings in the Arctic snow. "Right at the yellow quadrant, past the life-size chess game and that's the Med." We struggled off to the Mediterranean village.

We were going where thousands stream every day—to Europe's largest indoor shopping fantasy. To feel, to experience the dream that is Tyneside's Metrocentre. A monument to 1980s Britain, its creator John Hall once declared that it "embodies everything Thatcherism says". Hall, a self-made millionaire developer who lives in a stately home, has come to symbolise enterprise culture in the north-east.

The decade will be remembered for the all-consuming passion of its retail revolution. Leading the post-industrial show in the advertisers' Great North is next year's Gateshead Garden Festival, the multi-million pound sites of the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation and, of course, the Metrocentre.

Inside Metroland, children scream on the gigantic indoor Big Dipper; Geordie lads in designer denims hang round the ten-screen cinema; families rest by the bandstand where the Whitley Bay school choir sings carols for charity. By the fountain in the Antique Village Square, a woman sat encircled by a wall of shopping bags. She covered her face, laughing: "It's not all mine! I'll probably cry when I add it all up on the coach back to Barnsley—but we've had a great day out."

We shook hands with a green dragon in the Kingdom of Whizz, passed by McDonald's, looked in 140 tinselled shops and tramped most of the 1.8 million square feet in the rate-free enterprise zone. At the Information Centre we flicked through brochures advertising the open air Beamish Museum—a memory of the north's industrial past, once described as "a working-class Disneyland".

Tidings of comfort and joy? Tyneside seeks salvation through shopping at the Metrocentre

Last Christmas over 2,000 Sunderland shipyard workers collected their last pay packets, after 600 years of shipbuilding was buried at sea. By 1987, as manufacturing declined, 69 per cent of jobs on Tyne and Wear were in the services. But the region cannot shop and serve its way out of mass unemployment. Even those jobs now on offer are weak on pay, hours and security. And they may disappear as recession threatens the retail sector.

We chatted to a shop supervisor, waving her electronic wand over our Christmas presents. Like everyone else she works part-time—evenings and Saturdays. "They'll be wanting us to work Sundays soon—that's when

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I become very religious! I need to be with the kids." Staff fear that even though Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, many shop-workers will be called in.

Shops move into top gear as eighties-style flexibility reaches its peak. One store with 60 staff members has brought in 200 Christmas casuals doing only three to four hours each, so they get no tea or lunch breaks, no terms or conditions. "People are anxious for money for presents," said a local trade union official, "Their husbands are out of work and they have to live."

Exhausted, we finally collapsed on the packed train home. From the Metrocentre down to the coast, we passed acres of land taken over by another Thatcher creation, the Tyne and Wear (Urban) Development Corporation. Also in the regeneration game to win what she calls "those inner cities", the corporation is sticking to the decade's favoured development formulae.

At North Shields, near the mouth of the Tyne, their £200-million prestige scheme for high-cost homes has hit opposition. "It's utterly ridiculous, it doesn't relate to local residents,"

The nineties may yet see Gorby on the Tyne, arriving to cut the ribbon on the Festival of the Northern Seas"

says Nancy Escritt from the Riverside Action Group, which is calling for more relevant projects. "Meadowell Estate, right next door, has over 80 per cent unemployed—I'm one of them. The yuppies might let me in to clean, but we won't be able to afford the facilities and they're even planning their own school. They might as well build a wall around it."

The crumbling of other walls in eastern Europe opens a unique window of opportunity for the local economy. The Riverside Action Group has tried to grasp this alternative vision for the nineties. Let's not look south down the M1 to the Channel tunnel and the exclusive Golden Triangle, they say. Better to take a ferry from the Tyne to the Baltic states, the Soviet Union and Scandinavia, and develop the traditional trade routes which froze with the cold war.

The plan would salvage existing skills and industrial land before they sink forever. It builds on roll-on, roll-off port facilities, the real possibility of major gas developments just off the coast, and a research centre for the renewable energy sources likely to take off in the "green" nineties. It holds out the prospect of maintaining an industrial Tyneside—projecting over 3,000 skilled, high-wage jobs on this site alone.

As property prices plummet, one developer has already offered to consider alternative ideas. The nineties may yet see Gorby on the Tyne, cutting the ribbon on the Festival of the Northern Seas. Otherwise, the leisure-retail world will continue to seduce us. We turned into our street to see our impulse-purchase sofa-bed roll off the Metrocentre delivery van.

Stormy weather

Claire Sanders asks if Brighton Marina is all washed up

All the money in the world will not protect the residents of the Brighton Marina from the strong south-westerly winds that sweep up the English Channel. A new housing and leisure development to the east of Brighton, and a neo-classical monument to the mid-80s housing boom, it is hard to recognise the site from the publicity brochures. They promise a "Mediterranean lifestyle on your doorstep", "traditional Venetian architecture", "a luxury haven with every civilised amenity close at hand" and even "houses with unique access to the seven seas". But on a grey day in December the marina does not resemble Venice, Naples or Marseilles. Instead, it looks exactly what it is—houses and building sites straddled between a harbour, a grey cliff wall and the windy sea.

The marina has a chequered history. Back in 1963 a man called Henry Cohen thought it would be a good idea to build the biggest marina in Britain by constructing two huge breakwaters. There would be moorings for 2,000 boats and land reclamation would allow 1,000 homes to be built. But as property values crashed in the 1970s so did the marina. By the time the Queen opened it in 1979, £55 million had been sunk into the Channel and not a house built. The Electricity Supply Nominees sustained the heaviest losses, after investing much of their members' pension fund in the development.

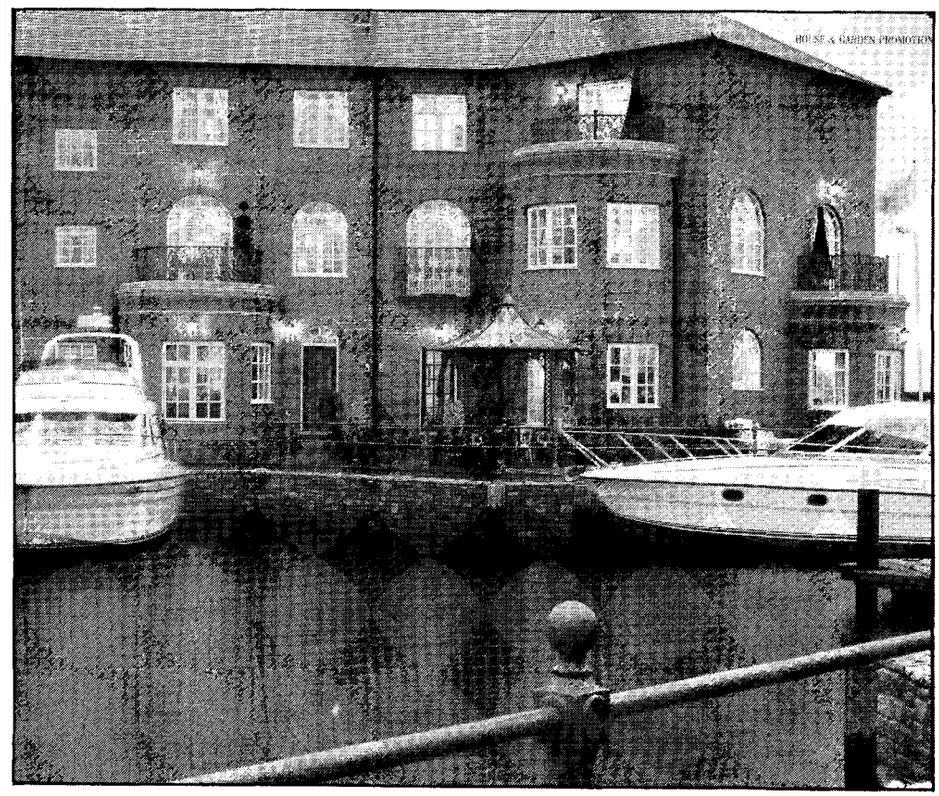
In 1985 the marina's saviour appeared in the 1980s form of George Walker, chairman of Brent Walker and brother of Billy Walker—a 1960s boxing star. Once a Billingsgate porter, Walker survived a two-year prison sentence for stealing a box of nylons to become the chairman of a leisure empire that extends from casinos and the Trocadero on Piccadilly Circus to Elstree studios and Goldcrest films.

In November 1985 Brent Walker bought the £55 million site for just £13.5 million. He promptly sold eight acres for £10 million to the Dee Corporation, which built a 70,000 square foot Gateway superstore, now owned by Asda. For £17 million Walker then sold land for houses to Barratt Homes—with the proviso that half the profits from house sales went to Brent Walker. All 62 one- and two-bedroom flats in the first phase were sold within three weeks at prices from £60,000 to £140,000. Two-bedroom flats were changing hands for more than £150,000 before the original owners moved in. There was never any pretence of providing anything but luxury homes. According to Barratts, two- and three-bedroom apartments are now going from £195,000 and four- and five-bedroom houses from £400,000.

But the property boom has bust, and things are different down at the marina today. Mark and Janine bought a one-bedroom flat when the properties first came on the market. Two years and one baby later they are stuck there and are contemplating renting it out. "There is a man here who helps arrange such deals, lots of people do it," says Janine.

She likes the marina and feels the flat would be perfect—if she were single. But she has never seen the neighbour who lives opposite. She regrets that residents are not allowed onto

From flagship to white elephant: Brighton Marina



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the marina itself unless they own a boat. Like many of the residents in the "Village", she and Mark do not. Janine hopes that the marina's "civilised amenities will soon stretch to a bank and a post office".

Michael used to run a business repairing boats on the marina—until he went bankrupt. Part of his problem was the huge overheads incurred by small businesses operating from the marina itself. Lunching on pie and chips in the portacabin that does for a yacht club—the proposed new club is still only an imposing series of supports looming out of the sea—he bemoans the loss of the boat that went with his business and lists the different species of boat-owner.

There are the serious sailors, the racing crowd. Then come the cruisers, and down from them the dinghy owners. Held in particular contempt by Michael are the power-boat owners: "I call them the golden medallion crowd, I know I shouldn't be snobby though." The serious sailors tend not to live in the marina village. "It's the power-boat owners that buy those houses, all money and no sense."

Viewing the flats on offer is a perplexing experience. I admired one with two bedrooms and three toilets (why?). Plastic garlic lends to kitchens that little touch of authenticity. One flat offered a much-vaunted "panoramic sea view" but I was told that this would disappear once the next development was completed: "You might be able to see the sea through the gaps." Last July the local paper reported residents' troubled comments on this development: "We have concerns that the Regency feel had been lost to a mid-European style which looks like something out of Vienna or Berlin."

Barratts maintain that the flats are still selling well. But one owner keen to sell will accept £115,000 for a two-bedroom flat with a £150,000 asking price. On a noticeboard near one of the flats is a cutting that reports a £90,000 reduction on one house (from £485,000 to £395,000).

"The serious tend not to live in the marina village. It's the power-boat owners, all money and no sense"

This summer the local press revealed that new work on the marina is almost at a standstill. It reported the collapse of a design firm and the delay of three major projects due to planning wrangles. More houses and flats, a proposed hotel and leisure centre, a cinema complex and car park were all delayed. Barratts were concerned: "The leisure facilities are one of the major attractions for people wanting to buy and they feature in our brochures. But there is still no sign of them on the site." A firm scheduled to build the cinema and hotel has cut all links with the marina after more than three years.

Disappointment and disaffection has even spread to the wealthy residents. "Bubbly" actress, Liz Fraser, "soon to be seen in a major dramatic role on the BBC", found rats in her new home: "I think it's disgusting really! A brand new flat and you've got rats in it."

Michael Bennett

Sunrise, sunset: a former industrial chemist welcomes the Panasonic management to Wales

Eastern promise

Nicholas Murray watches industry's new sunrise in Wales

Over a plastic beaker of coffee in the works canteen of Panasonic's squeaky-clean, 18-month-old electronics factory at Newport in south Wales, you start to learn that some of those generalisations about the Japanese way of doing things are actually true.

There are, for example, no boardroom lunches or executives loos: everyone mucks in together. "You couldn't tell who all these are," says Ivan Maund, the only non-Japanese director at the Newport plant, with an expansive wave of the hand in the direction of the crowded canteen tables. "We don't have any status that's visible," he explains, while admiting that shop-floor egalitarianism has its limits: "Someone has to make decisions so there has to be a hierarchy." He may be dressed in the blue uniform cotton jacket like everyone else, but he's still one of the bosses.

It's Donna Henderson's 22nd birthday, and for the past two years she's worked for "the Japs" inspecting up to 500 computer printers a day. She used to be a hairdresser taking home £50 a week plus tips, but wanted to buy a house. When she came to Panasonic her wages doubled, and she now takes home £420 a month. She bought the house.

Does she share the management's rosy view of this "new times" utopia? She plainly worries about getting into trouble for speaking her mind. She recalls when, last month, Mrs Thatcher made a triumphal progress through the monuments of Welsh enterprise culture: "I was dead chuffed. It was great. They had all those TV lights on and I was shaking all over. She put a hand on my arm and said: 'I don't like the lights either, dear.' She was really nice."

"It's too strict," she suddenly blurts. The tea breaks are only ten minutes long and you get a warning from your supervisor if you break into a run. You can't talk on the job and "there's someone watching you all the time". They were "melting" in the summer, but still weren't allowed to take their uniforms off or bring a drink from the canteen to the line.

"The Japs seem quite nice really. They don't bother you. They're not on your back." But, she implies, while they nod and smile courteously, the supervisors will always do their bidding. "It's boring", of course, for a lively, bright, young woman, but it does give her responsibility for her job. "I'd be gone long ago if it didn't suit me."

The factory is "tremendously fussy on cleaning" and there doesn't seem a hair out of place. "I'm glad it's not like a pigsty," says Donna. Maybe this is a spin-off from the regimentation. Some of the other girls (women make up 70 per cent of the workforce) joke that it's like *Tenko*, the TV prison-camp drama series. "You're not goint to put that in are you?"

Jean Newman is 30 and she doesn't mind the strictness: "I'm an organised person." She has a little EETPU brooch on her uniform and over the past year has been promoted very quickly. She started last November as an operator like Donna, and was promoted in January to line leader. From next January she will be earning £8,200 a year as a junior supervisor. Her previous job had been part-time in the Asda superstore. As she pointed out, "I enjoy coming to work. The day flies by. I get on with the Japs fine. What people notice first is that the place is spotless. I saw the managing director eating in here and I thought: that's very good. In Asda the managers had their own table on the other side of the canteen. The managing director had different cups and saucers as if to say: that's good enough for them but not good enough for me."

The working week starts with a bell and

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Monday morning assembly, when the personnel director makes important announcements and production figures are reported. New managers might introduce themselves. Jean likes this, and doesn't mind the general discipline: "How could you keep the production line going if people were off having a cigarette in the toilet?"

For Ivan Maund as personal director, the fundamental difference in the Japanese style of work that hit him after 16 years at Thorn-EMI was the expectation of: "Hands-on management, not management by delegation. Here it's about speed of action. If it's more conveninent to do a simple mundane task you do it rather than discrupt your subordinates. We do everything."

Senior manufacturing manager, John Wheatstone, agrees: "The Japanese pay much more attention to detail and they emphasise planning greatly. I'm also struck by their own personal discipline. Their self-discipline and commitment is very high and they care about *quality*."

For Panasonic, Newport represents a £12 million investment. It forms part of Welsh secretary Peter Walker's strategy of using incentives to lure high-tech business into areas where traditional industries have collapsed. Sales of printers, typewriters and telephones from the plant will total £36 million this year. Panasonic's owner, the Kyushu Matsushita company, has three sites in Wales, with another two planned to start production in 1990.

The managing director spotted an ambulance arriving and asked to be personally informed of any accident to any employee. It was pointed out that a British MD wouldn't want to be burdened."

Wheatstone finds that his Japanese colleagues have a tremendous respect for each other. "In British industry you are told you have to *earn* respect but that is not the case here. They will never argue with one another openly. In the UK we are so busy criticising each other we've lost the objective. You never hear a Japanese criticising the MD."

Will this well-mannered docility create a conformist workforce? Both Maund and Wheatstone insist that when there's a requirement for questioning—for example, in research and development—the challenge and innovation come out. "But what we've all agreed on Friday we get on and do on Monday."

Finally, attention to detail strikes the Welsh managers as a pre-eminent characteristic of the Japanese approach. John Wheatstone tells how the managing director, having spotted an ambulance arriving, asked to be personally informed of any accident to any of the 460 employees. It was pointed out to him that a UK MD wouldn't want to be burdened with such particularity. "He just smiled and sat back."

Nice work

Mike George on the job trends that benefit British bosses

Ten years ago Joe Soap was working in an old "smokestack" industry, making British cars. Today he's in a "sunrise" industry, making Japanese cars. Joe's working harder, but now has regular chats with his supervisor. He doesn't get union-negotiated pay settlements, but "merit awards" decided by his supervisor, and he's been offered a special deal to buy his company's shares. He now works a complicated shift pattern which means he doesn't see his family at all every fifth weekend, or for 17 evenings a month. He gets 4 per cent more money in real terms than ten years ago.

Enid Blyton is working for a supermarket, getting £47 a week take-home pay for 17 hours' work. Ten years ago she was working in the supermarket full-time, with much higher wages—but no one gets full-time work now. She's had two hours' training on the new electronic till, and they gave her a different job title, but nothing else has changed.

Jason Donovan, aged 24, has been trying to get a job since 1981. He's had several spells of unemployment, and has been on six "training" schemes—none of which has equipped him to get a decent or secure job. His £27.40 a week social security benefit has just been cut, because he refused a job in a local pub with £70 a week take-home pay. Next week he goes for his second "Restart" interview at the employment exchange, where he expects to be offered something called Employment Training.

Kylie is a lone parent, and reckons she hasn't a hope in hell of getting a decent job.

The creation of a "business-friendly" environment in the last decade has changed many aspects of the job scene. In the process the government has had more judgments held against it by the European Court than any other EC country. It also leads in the number of International Labour Organisation conventions flouted. In the name of "flexibility" protective legislation for women and young people has been removed, minimum pay rates determined by Wages Councils have been severely undermined, and many trade union functions have been made effectively illegal. Pre-1980 guides to labour law now look quaint.

During the 1980s the population of working age has gone up by 1.5 million, but about the same number have become economically inactive, especially older men and other "discouraged workers". According to government figures, numbers in full-and part-time work have declined by over half a million through the 1980s. Full-time jobs have been cut by over 1.8 million, while part-time jobs have increased by 1.3 million. But government publications tend to use 1983 as the base year, which allows them to claim that two million new jobs have been created since then. By disowning the 1979-1982 period a real net loss of jobs is obscured.

Manufacturing employment now represents 22 per cent of all jobs, compared with 32 per cent at the beginning of the decade. Service jobs have increased from 58 per cent to 68 per cent—the vast majority of the increase being part-time work. Almost all of these extra jobs have been filled by women. Of six million or so part-time jobs, over four million have wages which are below the Council of Europe's decency threshold. Over a million more people are on low pay than at the beginning of the 1980s.

This "downward flexibility" in pay was supposed to price people into jobs. But there's no correlation between sectors in which pay has declined and the numbers in work. Patterns of employment have danced to different tunes. Meanwhile, unemployment among young people has been massaged down by the application of "workfare"-style systems of control. Unemployment as a whole has been diminished by 29 technical changes in the ways of counting it. Equal pay for women has worsened by a couple of percentage points, employment of black and Asian people has been effectively ignored, and 40 per cent of households with an earner now have lower real incomes than they did in 1979.

Labour market flexibility has also meant that top earners pay themselves an awful lot more. Lonrho's Tiny Rowland gets over £1 million a year, Lord Hanson receives £1.3 million and the TSB's chairman recently had a pay award of 242 per cent. To have been a winner in this decade you must have made sure not to be disabled, female, black or Asian, living in the north, or looking after a family. Simplistic explanations of what's happened to jobs in the 1980s, like the concept of post-Fordism, don't begin to do justice to the effects of the Thatcher project in making Britain "business-friendly".

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Welfare Watch

The gift wrap

Tony Lynes finds a legal tangle in the Christmas box

A number of benevolent funds have decided not to pay their customary Christmas bonus to needy pensioners this year because, under DSS regulations, it would be clawed back by weekly deductions from income support payments. At first sight, the income support rules regarding charitable payments look reasonable. Occasional one-off gifts are treated as capital, which means that they are ignored unless the recipient's capital, including the gift, is over £3,000.

Regular charitable payments, however, count as income, of which the first £5 a week is ignored and the rest is deducted from the person's income support entitlement. Payments made at longer intervals than one week are treated as income spread over a similar period. Thus, a regular annual payment of £52 normally counts as income of £1 a week for £52 weeks.

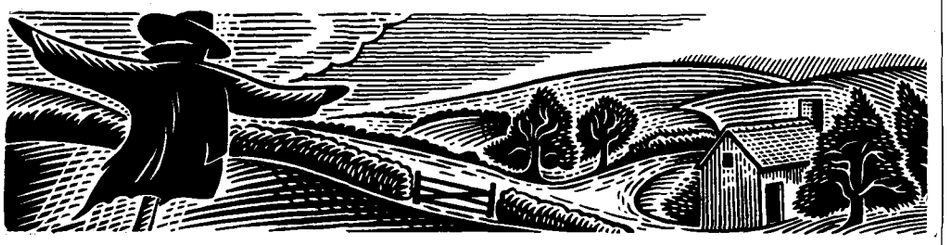
If the only regular charitable payments a person receives are annual lump sums of up to £260, equivalent to a weekly payment of £5 or less, his or her income support entitlement will not be affected. The benevolent funds' dilemma is that, because they are already making payments of £5 a week or more to people on income support, the regulations as interpreted by the DSS leave no room for regular additional payments at Christmas.

However, an appeal tribunal might well accept the argument that a Christmas bonus is not like other annual payments. The regulations say that if a payment is "payable in respect of a period" it should be taken into account over a period of equal length. A Christmas bonus is paid "in respect of" Christmas week, since its purpose is not to help with year-round living expenses but to meet the additional expenses incurred at Christmas. It should therefore be treated as one week's income, not spread over 52 weeks. On that basis, if a pensioner receiving £10 a week in income support gets a bonus of £100, it should result in the loss of one week's income support, leaving a profit of £90.

The problem with this argument is that, if adopted by the social security commissioners and applied in all cases, it would result in less favourable treatment where the person concerned was not receiving weekly charitable payments. At present, s/he is allowed to keep the whole of a Christmas bonus of up to £260. That would cease to be the case if the bonus were treated as only one week's income.

The simplest way to cut through the legal tangle would be for government to amend the regulations so that Christmas presents in cash, to a reasonable limit, would be ignored, whether paid regularly or not. There is plenty of time to make that change before next Christmas.

FRINGE BENEFITS



Colin Ward Bides-Awhile at Distant Point

Christmas comes but once a year to Bide-Awhile, the shop where, having fed their machines and themselves, motorway travellers linger, almost reluctant to leave the oasis, and gather up crisps, sweets, cigarettes, novelties and a great weight of newspapers and magazines.

For me, unfamiliarity gives the service areas on major roads the same romance that attaches to the lineside stopping points on the Trans-Siberian railway: little lonely depots where the locomotive takes on fuel and water, and where the passengers stretch their legs and buy in stocks of hardboiled eggs, cucumbers, bread, sunflower seeds and vodka for the next lap of the journey.

I envisage little settlements around the distant points where political exiles and people with a past to hide build log cabins, a wooden school for their children and a church for their souls, and timetable their lives around the sequence of arrivals and departures. Ancient towns and cities grew this way at crossroads and river junctions. Whatever happens in central Asia, our planning legislation makes sure that it can't happen at British motorway interchanges, where the service staff inevitably drive in on the nearside lane from the closest human habitation.

Actually, so travelogues tell me, even in the far east the sellers themselves board the train at the last recognisable place, and kip down in the guard's van, where they heat up their sausages, borscht and tea on little kerosene stoves. Once arrived at the lonely stop, they set up their own Little Chefs or Happy Eaters along the platform. And the nomads ride in on their camels or pack-horses from their seasonal camps, bringing cured skins, beadwork and richly-woven prayer mats.

Passengers buy them as souvenirs of the journey, or as presents for their grandchildren in Irkutsk or Akademograd, while picking up sugar-candy and the metropolitan papers from the itinerant equivalents of the Drover's Rest or the Welcome Break.

The transient moment at Distant Point would be celebrated by the purchase of some little object of carved soapstone, ram's horn or pinewood, to sit on a shelf of knick-knacks back home for half a lifetime. In the 19th century the same thing happened here. When changing coaches at the Cock or the Bull at Stoney Stratford or trains at Crewe, people would buy a bit of Goss china, the decorated boxwood known as Mauchline ware, or just a picture postcard of the place.

All these mementos of particular locations began as unconsidered trifles, and then became household junk. Slowly they were transformed into curios, then bygones and finally antiques. Collectors now seek out and trade in these transient keepsakes.

Today, down at Bide-Awhile, the staff drive in to cover the unsocial hours and unpopular weekend shifts, guided through remote control by the supervisor. Their big headaches, apart from that of ensuring that the right collection of supplements are inserted into the correct Sunday papers, occur when purchasers change their mind having seen the cash rung up. As noone can afford to trust anyone else these days, the assistant has to phone through to the supervisor for authorisation to repay 30p to a customer who objects to that price for a bag of crisps.

The real money is in impulse purchases of objects that confirm the fleeting visit. Normally they're stuck with authentic replicas of red telephone boxes, guardsmen, Highlanders or London taxis. But Christmas brings a brisk trade in seasonal novelties. At the bottom of the range there are Jolly Bendeers. These are moulded plastic reindeers with flexible wires through their limbs so that they can adopt the posture of your choice, at £1.50. Then at £3 there are fluffy snowballs on skis. You wind them up and they go round in circles. For the big spenders, at £13 (only one left at the time of writing) there is a Teddy Bear who, if you squeeze its paw, will sing Jingle Bells, Old MacDonald or Frère Jacques. A more recondite adult pleasure costs only £2 more. This buys you a pot of Plastic Flowers that Wriggle. If you shout or sing or whistle loud enough, their stems slowly girate.

Children coming into Bide-Awhile discover that if you put the singing Teddy in front of the Wriggling Flowers, you can make the one operate the other.

Buy now, while stocks last, but keep them unworn in their original polythene bags. History tells us that if you can store them long enough, the cycle of taste will ensure that, like fairground plasterware, clay dolls, tinware toys, Dinky and Matchbox models, all this instant rubbish will be seen as a charming epitome of the 1980s by the collectors' markets of the 2030s. Hold on to it, unless by chance you have other things to think about.

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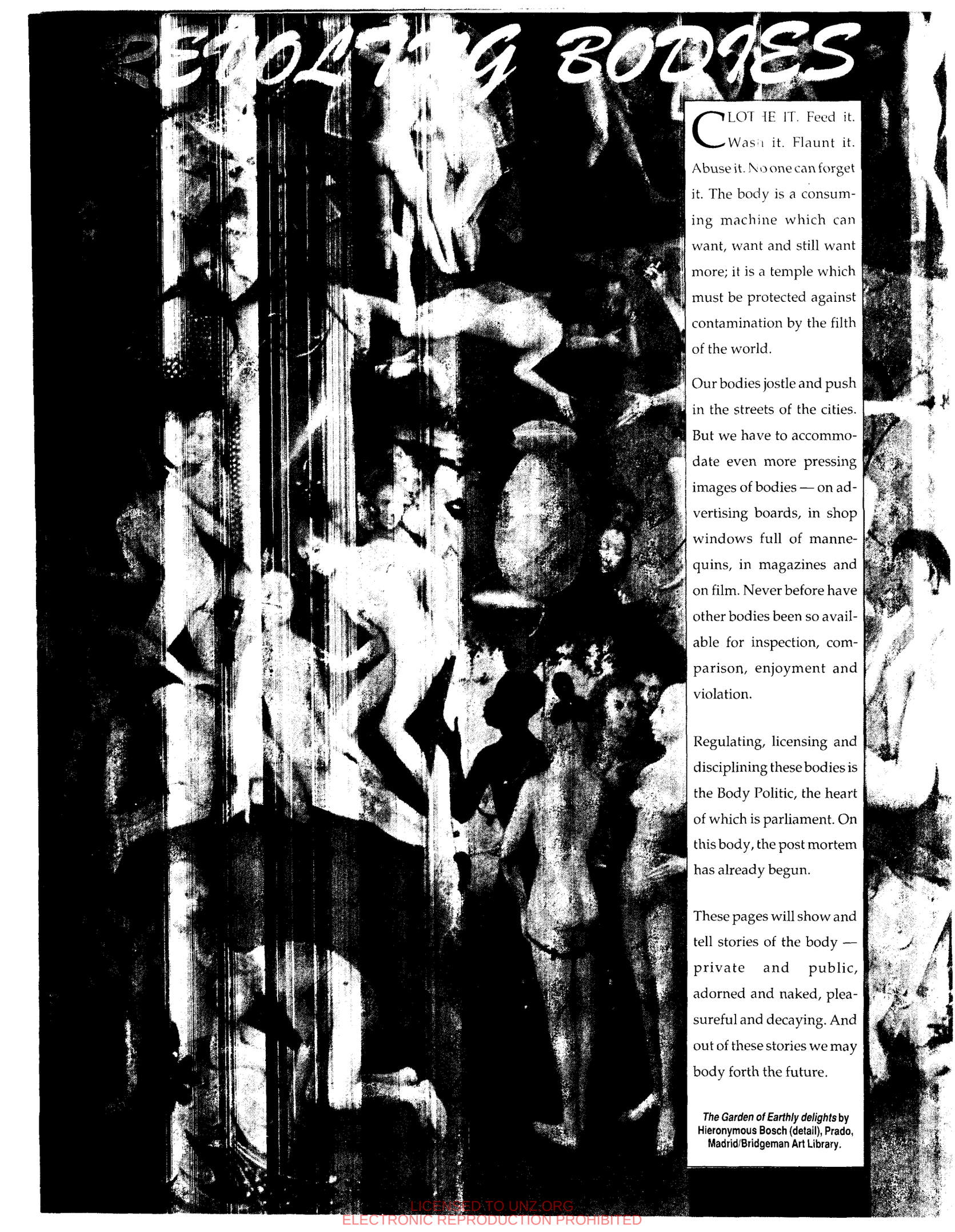
CLOTHING BODIES



CLOTHE IT. Feed it. Wash it. Flaunt it. Abuse it. No one can forget it. The body is a consuming machine which can want, want and still want more; it is a temple which must be protected against contamination by the filth of the world.

Our bodies jostle and push in the streets of the cities. But we have to accommodate even more pressing images of bodies — on advertising boards, in shop windows full of mannequins, in magazines and on film. Never before have other bodies been so available for inspection, comparison, enjoyment and violation.

Regulating, licensing and disciplining these bodies is the Body Politic, the heart of which is parliament. On this body, the post mortem has already begun.

These pages will show and tell stories of the body — private and public, adorned and naked, pleasureful and decaying. And out of these stories we may body forth the future.

The Garden of Earthly delights by Hieronymous Bosch (detail), Prado, Madrid/Bridgeman Art Library.

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ALL TEETH 'N' SMILES

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Christ Carrying the Cross **by Heironymous Bosch (detail). Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent/Bridgeman Art Library**

JEANETTE WINTERSON RANTS AGAINST THE CORRUPTION OF THE BODY POLITIC.

There is a painting by Uccello called *A Hunt in the Forest*. It is commonly held to mark the coming of perspective in art. In the foreground the huntsmen gallop to and fro with their dogs. Looking into the painting, into the forest, the horses and the dogs and the men calling to one another as they go, get smaller and smaller, until they are only splashes of colour and finally points of light.

Memory, I think, plays similar tricks with the eye. We try and see things clearly but find the foreground distractions too big and noisy. Then we discover that whatever is further away has already begun to merge with the trees and the night. The past cannot be recorded, it can only be retold. Re-telling the past 10 years is not for me a calendar exercise. It is a metaphysical exercise. I want to know what changes have taken place in the way we think, what has happened to our imaginations. Very often, metaphors are used to describe situations more vividly, but it is the situations themselves that are the metaphors, symbols of the inner life.

Whatever else the last ten years have been, they have been the documentary of our collective imagination. If the Cabinet is stuffed with the most unspeakable grotesques, far fouler than their *Spitting Image* likenesses, we have put them there, whether we voted for them or not. They are an emblem of all that is disgusting about human beings; greed, self-righteousness, rhetoric, mendacity, hooliganism run mad.

As we approach our *fin de siècle*, we seem to have chosen to dig out our blackness and hold it up for all to see. When I'm optimistic I believe this is because we want to do away with it forever. Not in a repressed pretend way, but because we have lived long enough around the full horror of what we can be. The ancient custom of displaying corpses may well have a deeper hold than we think. When we look upon the likes of Cecil Parkinson, Norman Tebbit and Nicholas Ridley to name but three, what else are we doing but contemplating the death of the heart?

Earlier this year I was finishing a pleasant lunch in a cheerful Covent Garden restaurant, when I noticed the rictus smile of Kenneth Baker dispensing bonhomie to his fawning publishers from Faber and Faber. Among the party, clearly having a jolly time, was that waistcoated radical and sometime poet, Craig Raine. I was deeply embarrassed. How could any one of any sensibility want to be seen in public with Kenneth Baker even in the line of duty?

I left in a hurry and cheered myself up with a bit of consumer spending, only to be caught on the way home by bright hordes of gabbling school children. As I stood squashed between them, listening to LRT intoning its familiar litany of excuses about the failure of all the rush hour trains, I looked at their faces, still full of hope, and wondered if they'd forgive us for the Baker Act? They will after all, have to live out the truth of that lie.

The 1980s has been the decade of the Big Lie. For the first time, outside of fiction, lying has become an acceptable mode of discourse. Naturally, people have always lied, politicians more than most, but as far as I know it has never been accepted as an ordinary part of life. Lying used to be something reserved for matters of expediency. Now, from the most trivial to the most serious it is simply what we do. Lying has become a realistic alternative to telling the truth.

I am not concerned with or seduced by a notion of the Good Old Days, but I do know that only as this decade has crept on, have we become a nation of routine liars. At street level this manifests itself whenever we want to do something simple like arrange for the delivery of goods or make an appointment with British Telecom.

A day and a time are promised (note the use of the verb) which have nothing to do with what will actually happen. The bizarre thing is that all parties concerned know this perfectly well. Any protest will render the complainee subject to abuse, excuses and more lies. What should be a simple transaction is turned into a Byzantine maze of falsehood. Of course, the larger the company the worse it gets, though I was offered this pearl the other day by an employee of British Gas:

Me: I have waited all morning for your engineer. He was due at nine and it is now after lunch. What has happened?

She: I'm very sorry Mrs Winterson, last night that particular engineer became a Jehovah's Witness and he has refused to

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service the appliances of anyone not on his list of 144,000 believers. Unfortunately, we don't have access to the list of his potential clients in the London area. He is being disciplined.

Sadly, the normal grind of being wilfully and daily misled, is not so entertaining. It is both numbing and hopeless. It was a trick of the Gestapo and it still is a kingpin of the South African regime to break people down by severing the association between language and reality. At its most banal you say it will be done in the morning when you mean afternoon. Monday when you intend Thursday. You say it will definitely be here when you are pretty certain it won't be, and you insist you have one in stock until the money's been handed over and it's suddenly six weeks away.

Going deeper, promises, personal guarantees, sincere assurances, have taken on their opposite meanings and become sinister warnings of something nasty in the woodshed. At mid-level, in business they are usually a scam to get you to part with the money.

At the highest level, in government, they are the verbal indicator of out-and-out black heartedness. Cecil Parkinson is not fit to hold office. He has cheapened every job with his every job with his sticky presence. He is the human equivalent of wormwood and gall. Parkinson's very existence depends upon a society to whom standards of behaviour now no longer matter. He has proved that not only do we fail to punish people who have behaved appallingly but that we reward them.

In the political past, before our current reign of terror, scandals were uncovered a little or some time after the event, and we were rightly shocked, as much by our tacit condoning, through ignorance, of persons or actions that disgust us. In the glorious 80s, scandals have unfolded before our eyes and nothing much has happened. We sit in front of the telly watching this government writhe in its own filth and still we haven't brought them down. What will the future make of a society who watched their own corruption like a late-night movie?

I'm optimistic. We can go a bit lower but not much. If the imaginative defeat of the 80s has been to replace the complex possibilities of truth with the easy option of lying, then the material correlate of such visionary paucity is waste. Waste of time, of energy, of human and natural resources.

By insisting that there is no problem, whether in housing, employment, the environment, education, or in the kind of people the system is breeding, the problem is reaching unsustainable levels. The problem can no longer be hidden because the infrastructure of our society is breaking down. How can you paper over the cracks when the walls themselves have fallen?

An obvious prediction for the 90s is that the Tory government will not win the next election, nor any after it for some time. The streets are full of bodies, without homes and without hope, and telling us that they do not exist is not making them go away. Even the Tory faithful are beginning to feel shifty. You can see it in their darting eyes although their mouths still spout like ancient fountains.

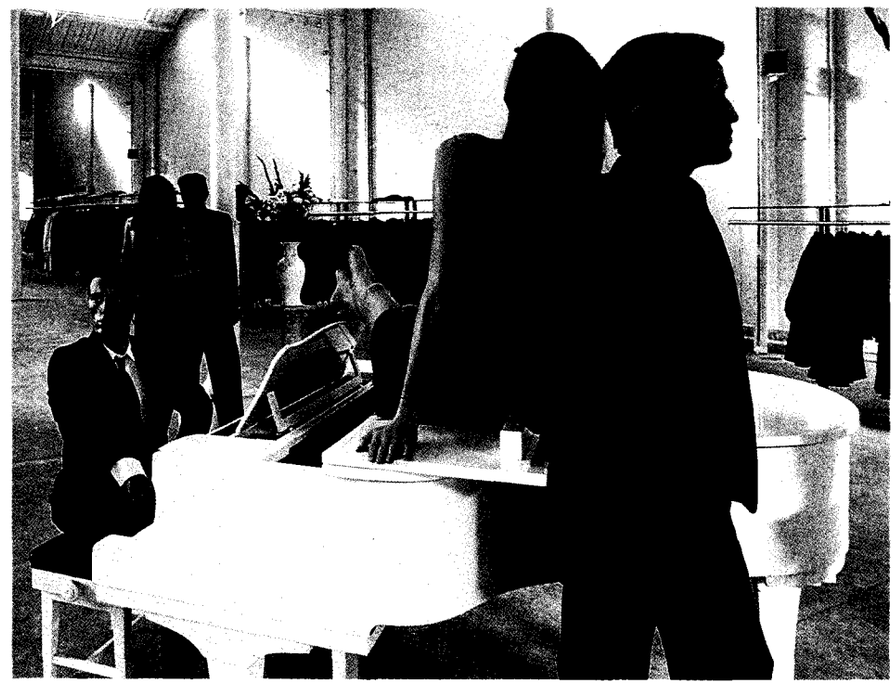
They are a party on the run, chased by furies of their own making. Mrs Thatcher will be the first to reach the abyss and fall in. Thereafter, those twittering ghosts that make up her Cabinet will be consigned to the powerless twilight they deserve. As a punishment I would have them all read Jeffrey Archer novels until their dying days.

I am sure that the Green party is going to alter what we think of as politics. Not only their agenda but their style is really different and is much more than trendiness or fashion. The Greens are the manifestation of the real imaginative shift of the late twentieth century. They are what comes after the lying and the disgust. What bliss it will be to see a parliament that is not dominated by overweight ugly men in suits.

The current trashing of the Greens is a good sign. In our sick culture it means they are being taken seriously. They are manifestly the party with the monopoly on truth. Even their fiercest detractors are confounded by the facts and the facts are that we are running out of world and time and no amount of carping can change that. Whatever the farmers' lobby says, food production the way it's been has had it. Whatever the road lobby says, the death of the private car is upon us. Even Volvo have admitted it and are diversifying like crazy. The bottom is falling out of consumer addiction. Our habits are much too expensive.

I don't foresee a society where everyone is going to work by bicycle and arranging informal creches for the fun of it, but I do think that, as the old guard are either shoved out or simply die off, there will be enormous potential for change. We have the best chance since the aftermath of the first world war to totally restructure our culture. Refusing to accept the lies, refusing to deal in lies, may sound philosophical, perhaps even ivory tower but it will have far-reaching and practical effects.

Not accepting lies means refusing crappy architecture in spite of someone in authority saying it's nice (they wouldn't live there themselves of course). It means refusing to accept that nuclear power is good for us or even necessary for us. It means facing up to the fact that the nuclear family is outmoded and bad for most of its members. It means testing every cherished assumption and seeing whether or not it's just hogwash.



Katherine Hamnett, Fulham Road
Martin Black, Impact Photos

Maybe we'll be left with very little to take into our new century. The 80s have mortgaged the future, the 90s will be a time to start nurturing it again. Things take a long time to grow, but it's not too late. Kathy Acker in her difficult and dazzling novel, *Empire of the Senseless*, (no prizes for guessing that's us) ends with this:

"And then I thought, that one day, maybe, there'd be a humane society in a world which is beautiful, a society that wasn't just disgust."

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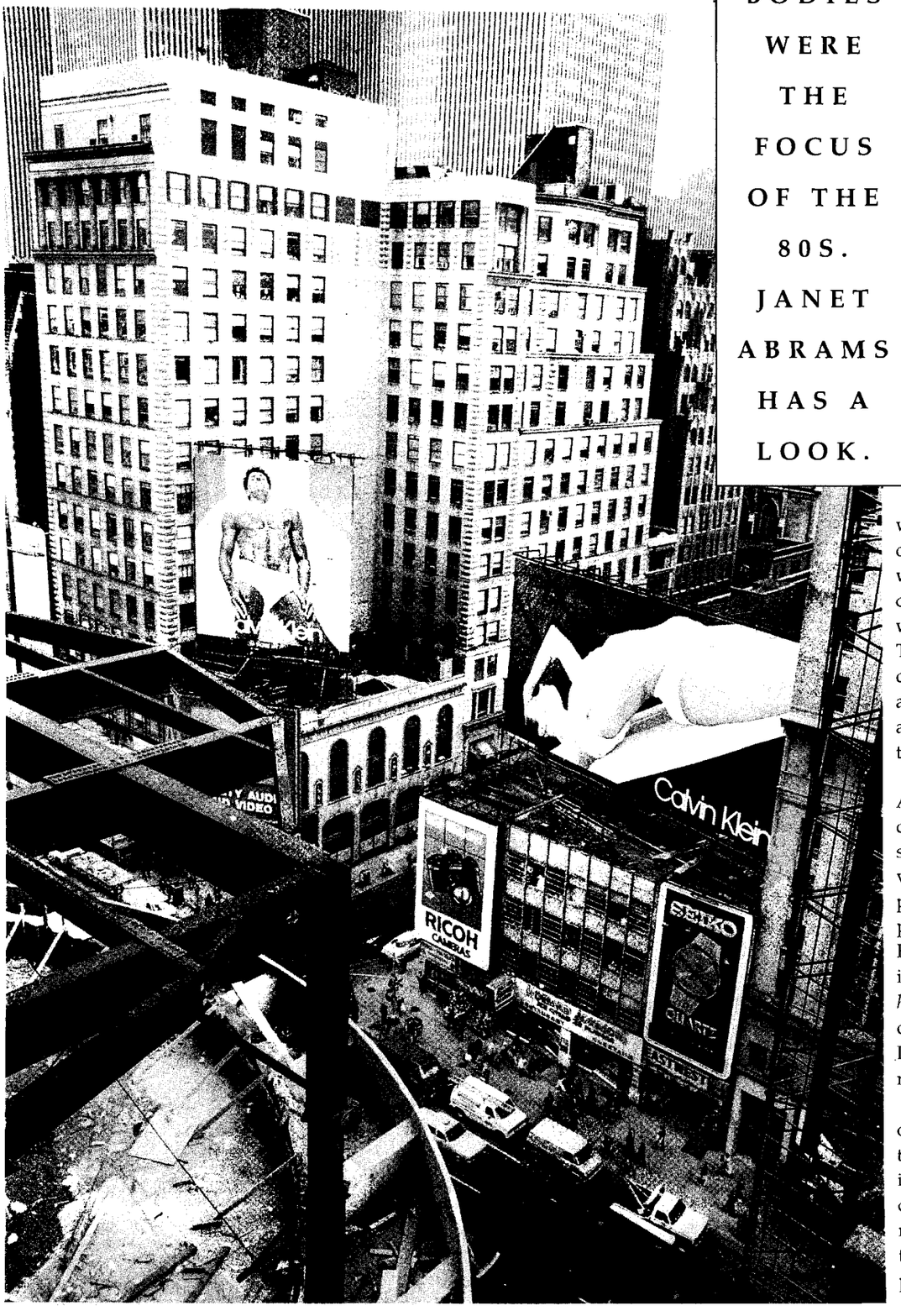
HULKS ON PARADE

In the midst of a bitter March, in 1984, as chill winds ripped through the bare steel bones of the Marriott Marquis Hotel, under construction in Time Square, a man and a woman lay sunbathing. He was leaning back against a whitewashed wall; she arched diagonally on a diving board, both clad in the most minimal of briefs. Immune to the cold, ignorant of each other, they postured high above the turmoil, wallowing in sybaritic solipsism.

Throughout the freezing winter, I met the same guy at bus stops time and time again, always under-dressed for the weather, always glowing with Grecian incandescence, and he never said a word.

At that time of the year, one thinks mainly of one's shivering bones; he flaunted muscles, warmed by an ever-present sun. The sun shone for him even at night, when the street furniture was illuminated from within, and from these beacons of urban brightness he would continue to taunt with his exquisite, bronzed physique.

MEN'S BODIES WERE THE FOCUS OF THE 80S. JANET ABRAMS HAS A LOOK.



I never learned his name, but everybody knew him. Men like him became increasingly familiar as the decade wore on. They appeared in adverts of unaccustomed spareness: a single (usually mono) photograph on one page; a blank sheet but for the name Calvin Klein opposite. They were always stupendously well-built, as if drawn from Olympic rowing teams, which in fact they sometimes turned out to be.

The women of this master race took to wearing knickers modelled on Y-fronts: white cotton, with a functional elasticated waistband threaded with their maker's name. They cost a lot, these undies, more than your average Marks and Sparks attire. They were the apotheosis of "less is more".

In the mid-eighties, American magazines were dominated by astonishing sequences of fashion adverts, voluptuous runs of pages filled with large photographs of the Calvin Klein blue jeans boys, pouting with James Dean *hauteur* from their fifties convertibles, or the Ralph Lauren Polo set at their ranch.

The sheer extravagance of these spreads (no less than 16 consecutive pages in one such blitz in the Sunday *New York Times* magazine) was enough to take one's breath away, a profligacy concomitant to

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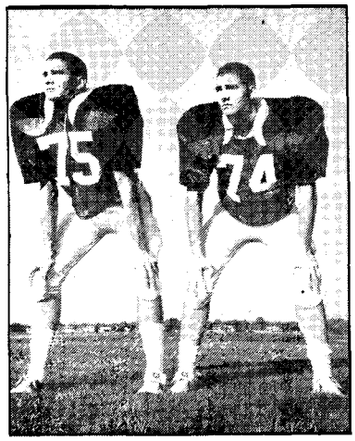

the affluence purportedly depicted within these photographic set-pieces.

There were immaculately attired diners around a table; a bow-tied, silk kerchief'd patriarch leaning on a studded leather chair; scenes on the polo field or on the porch of some colonial mansion. No captions spoiled the fabric of these sumptuous layouts, cool in their almost-sepia tones. They resembled leaves from a private family album upon which, as a mere Sunday supplement browser, one had been privileged to stumble.

One's sense of voyeurism increased with every page turn, so that, just when one was surfeited with the indolent serenity of this enchanted world, it carried on a few pages more. The *longueur* of the experience matched the dreamy sense of time suspended; a Gatsby-esque warm breeze filtered off these pages, drawing one into the leisurely lifestyle of prime stock and cocktails.

Such images, though referring to halcyon decades past, seem very much the hallmark of the eighties. As colour reproduction and glossy paper became more prevalent in consumer magazines, so the de-luxe brands began advertising in a visual style which distinguished itself from editorial fashion plates by its sparseness of text and renunciation of colour.

At the same time, the photographers Bruce Weber, Robert Mapplethorpe and Herb Ritts all came to prominence, as portrayers of the new rich, usually celebrities, but often just anonymous beautiful people. As Weber remarks in his latest album *Bruce Weber* (Knopf/Random House, 1988) , "Sometimes an athlete or actor thinks he's so much more beautiful than the way I see him. But it might have been his nose I was in love with."

Weber's collection, — a lush volume catalogued as "Photography: artistic" — contains predictably few women: Madonna kissing herself in the mirror, Jessica Lange having her nose kissed by Sam Shepard, and the odd actress or two. The bulk of this picture book is made up of hulks: boxers; Olympic crew members wrestling in the locker room; the windshield expanse of a champion swimmer's back, hewn like a mahogany wardrobe.

Privates Andrew Kenner and John Kenner, Texas A&M University Team (top left), ***Sergeants Colin Craig, Chip Pock, David Sanka and Stuart Lewis, Texas A&M Intramural, College Station, Texas, 1985 (above) and Madonna, NYC, 1987*** (right) **are by Bruce Weber from his latest album *Bruce Weber*.**

Here are twin football players, hands on plastic knee-caps, their dark eyebrows the facial equivalent of the giant shoulder pads that turn them into parodies of masculinity. Here are extras at Zoetrope studios, in Roman centurion costume, waiting only to shed this armour-plating and glory in their own rippling surfaces. And here are Harvard oarsmen in tatty kit. Weber has scoured the States for its prime cuts, for young men whose principal labour is the refining of their own anatomy.

These are bodies as landscape: hills and dales of flesh, escarpments of muscle and cheekbone. Even their close-cropped, gelled locks glint like intermeshing sinews. Flipping through these portraits, they all seem remarkably self-absorbed, even when

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looking straight into the camera. Weber's lens shrink-wraps each figure who is hermetically heat-sealed under bleached sunlight.

The names and occupations of each sitter are enumerated at the back of the book, like a shopping list, but these details are superfluous. Individual skills (actor, boxer, wrestler, kayaker) are secondary to the honing of fine musculature, the approximation to an ideal of physical perfection.

When, in his postscript, Weber wonders "how all the people I've photographed are doing", it can't help but smack of insouciance. Abstracted from life — theirs, ours — his subjects have been emptied of any individual identity besides their characteristic contours.

To wonder how they're doing would be to care about them as people, not just as specimens. It would necessitate concern for whether they are still as fit, or spoiled by increasing age, even sickness. In the age of Aids, Bruce Weber's photos of pretty boys in fullest bloom are tinged with particular poignancy: they are like still lifes of fruit so ripe it's just about to rot.

These portraits, and Calvin Klein's model boy, provoke an uneasiness in the woman viewer, by turns attracting and deflecting one's gaze. Here are fine examples of the opposite sex — too fine for average consumption — and surely not destined primarily for female pleasure. What is on offer to *women* in these male figure studies, nude or nearly nude? Skipping lightly on sun-etched sand,interlocked in jesting combat, or preening proudly before a male photographer, these are boys among boys, *for* boys — narcissistically concerned with their bodies relative to those of other men.

Looking at these photographs I am vexed by a sense that they are not addressed to me; that I am a spectator from the margins, trespassing on territory that belongs more properly to homosexual men. I can admire, but know that these images are manicured for another audience. If pin-ups of women offer heterosexual men the illusory prospect of gratification, these male pin-ups present women with a more double-edged promise.

The Calvin Klein model toasting in those New York posters was an archetype of eighties man, alluring, but unresponsive to women (his eyes, after all, were firmly shut) and too good-looking for his own good.

THE BODY BEREFT

The tragedy of Aids is that it burst on a world that was half expecting it. When the syndrome was first identified in 1981 the tocsins were already beginning to sound for the liberalism of the 1960s and 1970s, social purity was mobilising for action, and the New Right was on the threshold of its decade of triumph.

What better judgment on the moral failures of the past than a virus that seemed to affect disproportionately those already targeted for punitive action — the sexually, culturally and racially marginal? Here, in the words of President Reagan's Director of Communications, was nature's punishment on those who had transgressed the laws of nature.

FOR THE RIGHT, SOME BODIES ARE CORRUPT AND FORETELL THE APOCALYPSE. JEFFERY WEEKS ON THE MORAL CAMPAIGNS AROUND AIDS.

In the approach to the millennium, Susan Sontag has suggested, a rise in apocalyptical thinking may be inevitable. The sense of an ending, a premature *fin-de-millennium* spirit, appeared early in the world of sexuality, always a sensitive barometer of cultural trends.

What has been called a "recessionary erotic economy" was well-developed by the early 1980s, with a growing fear of disease matched by fetishisation of fitness. In such a climate Aids, intimately associated with sexual behaviour and with a prominent gay minority, became a symbol for a life already corrupted, for the healthy and beautiful body undermined by the viral invader.

The hollowed faces and wracked and painfully thin bodies of people with Aids were a marker for a spoiled identity, a metaphor for a doomed liberation, for an inflationary moral economy that inevitably crashed.

As a result, instead of evoking the sorrow, empathy and identification the sick and suffering might have expected from a liberal society, people with Aids were reviled and rejected. Throughout the western countries most affected, the governmental response — especially those governments where the New Right were dominant — was slow and tardy.

As Randy Shilts has bitterly observed, by the time President Reagan had delivered his first speech on Aids, six years into the crisis, over 36,000 Americans had been diagnosed with the syndrome, and some 20,000 had died.

It was not until the end of 1985, when it looked as if Aids was seeping into the general population, that the British government showed any signs of urgency, and attempted to manage the crisis. Aids was an epidemic that was allowed to happen, because of the indifference, if not downright hostility, of those in power and because of the association of the epidemic with those the culture preferred to forget.

One major reason for this neglect lay in that moral absolutism which bubbled to the surface in the 1980s. Throughout the decade New Right activists, secure in their own rectitude, have preferred to attack the victim rather than the disease. So we hear the leader of the Moral Majority in America calling for the rounding up and quarantining, like sick animals, of homosexuals.

We witness "a group of Christian doctors" in Britain issuing a plan to halt the Aids epidemic by segregating tens of thousands of people carrying the HIV virus. We see a prominent police chief foaming about people at risk "swirling around in a human cesspit of their own making". The quotations could go on and on.

They expose, in their language and prescriptions, a fear and loathing that goes beyond the rational. HIV brings terrible illnesses, but we have known for a number of years how it is spread, and how its spread can be minimised. As the decade ends we are on the verge of making Aids a condition that can be managed, at least in the developed countries.

Aids would have made an impact whoever and wherever it had struck. Its power was dramatised, however, because from the first it encapsulated some of the most profound currents that are reshaping the world. Aids powerfully underlines that pe-

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culiar tension between the universal and the particular which is so characteristic of the times we live in.

Aids is a syndrome of diseases that emerged in the first place in particular communities in the west: among gay men, drug-users, haemophiliacs, blacks. It is local and specific in its patterns of personal and social relationships. But at the same time it is global in its dissemination and impact, epidemic in east Africa as much as North America.

The syndrome illustrates simultaneously the diversity of the world—the variety and complexity of its patterns of behaviour, its moral codes, its way of life—and our interdependence as citizens of the global village.

In its melancholic way Aids speaks for a world in constant flux, for an epoch where the only certainty is uncertainty, yet where events in one small part of the planet almost immediately impact on people in another distant part. Aids is the first post-modern disease.

Behind a justified fear of disease is the fear of flux and uncertainty, and of the challenge of diversity. As we approach the end of the millennium the pace of change is accelerating. The world gets ever more complex, the moral issues ever more convoluted. Moral absolutism cuts the Gordian knot.

Funeral of an Aids victim.
Photo by Peter Marlow/Impact

It divides the world into the elect and the damned, the guilty carrier of disease and the innocent victims. It attempts to ride through the waves of change with its old certitudes, oblivious of the many other boats bobbing up and down in what has been called the wake of modernity.

But the challenge of diversity, like the challenge of HIV and Aids, will not go away, and moral absolutism cannot hope to come to terms with either of them. Which is why the real hope of the 1980s lay not in the moral posturing of the few but in the creative response of the communities most at risk, particularly the gay community, to the challenge of HIV and Aids.

The future lies with combining the ever-increasing possibilities of international cooperation with a respect for the richness and moral density of the local and particular, developing common values that can marry the universal and the specific. A starting point is an imaginative identification with the people living with HIV and Aids.

The end of an era usually produces moral deformations and paranoias and we have certainly witnessed these in the 1980s, especially around Aids. But as the events of this past year have shown, a sense of ending, and of the approach of the millennium, need not presage disaster. On the contrary, it is also a time of opportunity and hope, bursting on a world that had half-forgotten their possibility.

WORK HARD AND KEEP PUMPING

ROSALIND COWARD REPORTS ON THE MARATHON MENTALITY.

In J K Huysman's *Against Nature*, written in 1884, the decadent hero, Des Esseintes, who usually surrounds himself with artificial flowers, does something which would not be out of place as a decadent act in these nature conscious times. Tired of artificial flowers aping real ones, he wants some natural flowers that would look like fakes. He is well pleased with his collection. "Yes, his object has been achieved: not one of them looked real".

But unfortunately his collection also contains a number of plants which have settled for copying "the membranes of animals' organs... borrowing the vivid tints of their rotting flesh, the hideous splendours of their gangrened skins". Des Esseintes is dramatically reminded of syphilis. For him, it is a horrific reminder of the unreliability of nature.

At this moment of high public paranoia about the destruction of individual health, the environment, and even the planet, Huysman's novel is a reminder that the end of every century seems to bring with it preoccupations about decline and degeneration. Yet is is also a reminder of the difference between the two centuries. If the last century ended with fears of the end of religious morality, it was not without optimism.

But as we approach the end of the millennium, there is no comforting optimism about human capacities. Instead, there's a deep fear of humanity as the despoiler; there's a mood of repentance and self-punishment. Such assertions may seem puzzling when aspects of the last decade might invite speculation about the extreme indulgence with which we have pampered our bodies. But the attention which we have given our bodies has been double edged. Beneath the narcissism and the expenditure has been a growing morality, which, in shifting from sex to health, has become all the more fierce and urgent.

A recent copy of *Elle* took it upon itself

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Women bodybuilders.
Photos by Susan Meisalas/Magnum

same qualities. They reflect health, energy, vitality and sensuality." It's a message heard in many quarters, summed up by Anita Roddick of the Body Shop, who believes "health is sexy".

Elle is given to congratulating itself on spearheading a shift in the portrayal of women. Editorial representatives often claim that models have got larger, stronger and healthier, and therefore portray a more equal woman. This is certainly stretching the point since the contemporary image of casual sexiness and good health is no less coercive that the preceding stereotypes. But these commentators, in spite of inflating their own contribution, are certainly right about one thing: health has really begun to feature in our evaluation of each others' bodies.

Women have been in little doubt that, for the last 15 years or so, health has become an increasingly important component of the prevailing ideas of sexiness. "Fitness" was the first tenacious representation of this enmeshing of health and sexuality, but embodied in Jane Fonda's "going for the burn", it had decidedly masochistic overtones – recycling, in a contemporary form, the militaristic and disciplinary overtones of physical education (or PE as they used to call it.)

This masochistic thrust has certainly been dominant in public portrayals of the body in the last decade. One health farm advertised itself with "You work hard but your body loves it". Neatly encapsulating the way in which hard work and even pain have, for some people, become commonplace association with fitness. The marathon mentality is part and parcel of this thrust. It has encouraged people to pass through the "pain threshold", generating scenes evocative of the penitents and self-flagellants of the Middle Ages.

Masochism must also have played a definite part in the eighties' fashion for fe-

to define "modern glamour" as given off by its ten top models. "Forget the old preconceptions; modern glamour is decidedly natural rather than contrived. It is sensual, sensational but subtle." And the photographer of "these girls" went on: "They're all so different, yet they share the

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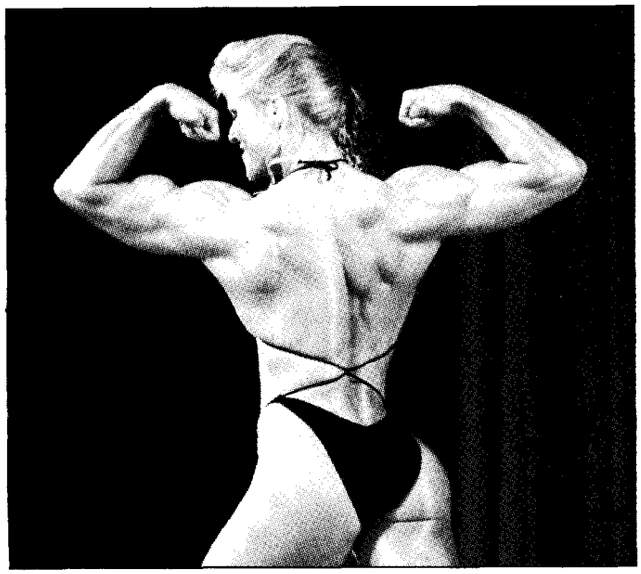

male body-building. This is paradoxical because the super-strong female body might appear the opposite of the passive and victimised body usually associated with masochism. But female body-builders submit to pain in order to transcend the female body's traditional passivity. It may be the case that few women have taken body-building to the asexual extremes of the professionals seen in the film *Pumping Iron* in 1985. But plenty of women have been influenced by a modified version of these values.

Hard muscles in a woman signify, as well as strength, a willingness to submit to pain, and therefore a willingness to submit to prevailing cultural values. And "sexiness" in a woman almost invariably denotes exactly that willingness.

This masochism is only the extreme end of the sense of "personal proof" embodied in the growing concern with health. Public interest in health and fitness has rarely been greater than in the eighties, taking more and more people to the fitness clubs and health farms. But even among those who do not "work out" or pursue "fitness regimes", there's a growing belief that health is not something that is just a lucky asset. Now health is something which has to be worked at and achieved. Even among those people who emphasise a more "holistic" approach there's a sense that true health will not be had without transformations of lifestyle, of diet, and even increasingly, of attitudes.

What is at work here is a growing morality around health, where the strong person will be able to fight off illness. This new morality is linked to the increased paranoia about the threats to our health. More and more we are being invited to see our bodies as the front line in a deteriorating environment with pollutants spoiling our air and water, and pesticides ruining our food. We are encouraged to take responsibility for our health before it is too late. Only our own efforts, in attending to what we eat and what we do, can save ourselves and re-balance our relation to nature.

The writer Simon Watney has spoken of this shift from sex to health as a shift in "subjectivities" in which health takes the place of sexuality. "Who knows", he says "sex might look very odd in 500 years time when people think of nothing but health." But that of course will depend on our surviving the scenarios of doom and destruction which have in part fuelled this shift to health.

HAUTE COIFFURE DE GEL

The eighties was the *style* decade. We glammed our way through Japanese shrouds and skin-tight leather, taffeta minicrinis and lycra leotards. The eighties have been *smart*.

Visit Rumours cocktail bar in Covent Garden any night of the week and you'll find more candidates for *Blind Date* in every square foot than there are sequins on a *Come Dancing* outfit.

The women — white and Afro-Caribbean — wear their hair very long, often in tangled curls, tight, thigh-length dresses in dark knits, and the ubiquitous red lipstick. The men still have the gelled post-*Brideshead Revisited* hair flopping over the forehead or combed back à la *Wall Street*, and they still wear their suits a size too large. I am not sure whether they have read *Today*'s recent article on how not to look naff. Style is larded thickly on, yet, like the Flying Tigers and Brandy Alexanders that everyone's knocking back, it's style in quantity rather than quality.

Or maybe it's reproduction chic—clones of Kylie, Sade and other, even more recent, pop stars. In the smart restaurant a few yards away there's a more up-market version of the same style: more short skirts and black tights and ragamuffin curls. These young men and women have created a look that spells money in some impossible-to-pin-down way. There's little sense of creating your own appearance, it's more a question of buying it.

Down in Knightsbridge and Brompton Square you can still see that otherwise endangered species, the natural brown or "black glama" mink coat. Full length, it's worn with loose, well tailored trousers and sometimes a headscarf. The men wear crombies so smooth and fudge coloured they could be coated in toffee. Soft, delectable. The rich seem to have retreated into the comfort of a style that's dreary yet comforting — furs, Burberry cashmeres, hand-stitched boots. It's all in the fabrics, oozing with wealth, the style's degree zero. In Hampstead it's different again; Italian leather or West German raincoats made of svelte synthetics and lined with real fur.

> ADORN YOUR BODY WITH EXPENSIVE CLOTHES, AND IMITATE THE RICH. ELIZABETH WILSON LOOKS BENEATH FASHION'S IMAGES.

In 1980s Britain it was once again chic to look rich. The problem was that *haute couture* had forgotten how to be haute. Accustomed now to borrow from street fashions, the couture houses took some time to adjust to the new money snobbery. The marquees at Wimbledon, Ascot and Henley were being taken over by big business; models and budding actresses were invited along to add to the glamour and they had to look smart.

And then there was

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Paris fashions (top). Photo by R Kalvar/Magnum. Joseph Tricot (left). Photo by Chris Steele Perkins/Magnum

a new generation of career women: ex-feminists in the law and the media who felt they could no longer wear second-hand frocks, little "forties" jackets and jeans. For a while, the Italo- Japanese solution seemed to be the thing: a bulky, straight tuxedo and a long shapeless skirt, both in black or charcoal grey, worn with flat shoes and a post-punk haircut. A sort of sartorial Brezhnevism.

Style aimed to respond to the fragmentation of class and to more minutely differentiated social groups of shoppers. The curious thing, though, about market segmentation, boutique niching and all the rest of the jargon, was that it did the opposite of what it claimed to do.

The result was not more choice, but just a Next, a British Home Stores, a Laura Ashley and a Marks and Spencer in every shopping precinct in the land (and in some cases all over the world). The theory of the market-nichers was also extremely crude. They thought there were just three types of people—aspirers, achievers and those who were neither. But wasn't this just a re-packaging of what we used to call class, upper, middle and lower? Nothing very new or subtle about that.

The operation remained a mass-market one; and all the talk about design concealed the fact that, in fashion at least, a few huge firms have cornered most of the market. Marks and Spencer account for about one third of retail spending on clothing in Britain.

The result has been conservatism of style, although there has been technical innovation in fabrics and fibres, so that we now have cotton mix tights and silk mix sweaters. Even Warehouse, a chain which sells innovative high fashion at relatively low prices, is itself part of the huge conglomerate, Sears.

The popular discussion in the media of fashion, style and design has conflated or confused at least two separate trends. There was the Next/Laura Ashley operation; there were also the street styles, disco styles and music styles. In the 1970s these had a political dimension. With punk, confrontation dressing was taken as far as it could go.

In the 1980s there were new cult styles but the politics faded. It was less and less clear what the rebellion was about, or whether there even was one. Punk had originally been a totally radical assault on every received notion of fashionability and beauty, yet in the 1980s punk motifs were taken up into what passed for mainstream fashion (the black, the haircuts, the double earrings, the harsh makeup).

Its fate was to be consumerised into a hard-edged urban style, suitable indeed for the eighties, but no longer radical.

This was decay, not decadence. At the *fin de siècle* decadence meant, paradoxically, the search for authenticity, for some new mode of being for new times, for truth to feeling, even the farthest reaches of feeling, and above all sexual desire. Sexual politics and aesthetic politics strove for expression in "decadence" — extreme experimentation in style as a fit vehicle for ideas and beliefs. Sometimes politics was displaced into art and personal relations, but the search was always the opposite of decay: it was the search for the "new life".

In pre-1990s Britain the special kind of Thatcherite decay is already at work, and before it's born "New Age" fashion has become little more than a style cliche. Ecology consciousness now dictates that soon we'll all be wearing calico sacks decorated with our own ingenuity and the help of a few dead leaves and twigs from the nearest park.

Personally I preferred consumerised punk to that. At least the take-up of punk created a credible urban style. At least it had a brutal, porno defiance, appropriate for the times. The worst style nightmare of the 1990s, so far as I'm concerned, is of Britain becoming the Albania of the western world, with all of us dressed up as Druids — a dying society pretending that it has been born again.

When style is reduced to market relations it can never say anything at all. Yet don't despair — at this very moment someone in some art school, cavern, squat or sink estate is creating what will be the real 1990s style: let's hope it's deeply decadent, worthy of this very special *fin de siècle.*

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After the handbag

Books on sub, ultra, and post-Thatcherism

Anthony Wright

As the Thatcher Years have rolled by, as election defeat has followed election defeat, so a certain mood has come to distinguish the intellectual left. It can best be described as buoyant pessimism. With Them in power, seemingly forever, the left has responded with a gloomy exuberance.

It has been like a collective coming out. Marxists confessing that they never really did believe all that pseudo-scientific crisis of capitalism. Collectivists stripping off to reveal themselves as closet individualists. Planners embracing the market. The state tossed out of everybody's window. Each revelation feeding the next, with an audible gasp of relief and release as the old ideological stuctures come crashing down. The message is that the world has changed—economically, socially, culturally, politically—and that it is necessary (somehow) to change with it. A new vocabulary—of post-Fordism, post-modernism, post-everything—is now *de rigeur*. And socialism? Oh that. Definitely post-poned, if not cancelled.

It is easy to get hooked on this kind of stuff. In recent years *Marxism Today* has provided a powerful monthly shot of it, now admirably collected into a *New Times* reader (ed Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques, Laurence and Wishart, £9.95). Once you get the hang of it (not easy, since everything is either a "disjuncture" or a "conjuncture") a truly heady pessimism soon sets in. It is a dazzling firework display, with very few damp squibs. Yet you do find yourself wondering about the general shape and point of it all. There is certainly a nice inversion of Marx here: the point, it seems, is not to change the world but to understand it. But it is a sustained and brave enterprise of understanding, with all the merits of old Marxism (the attention to the "economic factor") and none of the defects (the "reading off" of political consequences). It marks—there will be no thanks for saying so—the final integration of the Marxist tradition into mainstream analysis. It also marks—still no thanks—a *rassemblement* around a social democratic politics. Both are pure gain.

At least we now know better than we did what socialism is not (if not what it is). It is definitely not Thatcherism anyway. But wait a minute. Doesn't Nicholas Ridley's "enabling" state as applied to public services meet the left's own "enabling" state coming round the opposite corner? Isn't the New Times discourse essentially a radical one, in which radicals on both left and right have more to say to each other than to either old Labourism or old Toryism? The answer is unequivocal: yes and no. And if Thatcherism is the radical right response to New Times, perhaps there could also be a radical left response? At this point buoyant

Peter Schrank

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pessimism is in serious danger of turning into submerged optimism.

Of course, Mrs Thatcher is a radical, but only within limits. According to Samuel Brittan—in this interesting pot pourri, *The Thatcher Effect* (ed Dennis Kavanagh and Anthony Seldon, Oxford University Press, £25)—Mrs Thatcher is not a Thatcherite. Discuss. And Martin Holmes, in a slim and celebratory account of the second Thatcher government (*Thatcherism: Scope and Limits 1983-1987*, Macmillan, £29.50/£12.99), identifies the "populism" which has placed a firm limit on her ideological zeal.

At least there is no doubt about Stephen Haseler (*The Battle for Britain: Thatcher and the New Liberal*, I B Tauris, £14.99). Let's hear no more of that calumny about Social Democrats of the Haseler variety being sub-Thatcherites. It is not sub-Thatcherism but ultra-Thatcherism. My God, not even the Queen is safe from him. Thatcherism is the long overdue bourgeois revolution, sweeping away the old and installing the new, and Haseler the New Brutalist has enrolled as one of the revolution's shock troopers. Out with the old (paternalism), in with the new (bourgeois modernisation). After all those failed modernisations, this is the real thing.

Like its left version, you can see how easy it is to get carried away with this once you get started. The problems only come when you do start to ask the questions. Haseler might ponder (though pondering doesn't seem to be his line) why Mrs Thatcher has not taken his advice about the democratic revolution to accompany her liberal economic revolution. He might discover (as Vernon Bogdanor explains in his essay in *The Thatcher Effect*) that its source lies precisely in a restricted, market conception of freedom—and of human beings—and a consequent contraction in what it means to be a citizen. She is simply not interested in anything else (and besides, the strong state is useful in making the world safe for liberal economics).

Likewise, in his largely uncritical account of the second Thatcher government, Martin Holmes might have pondered why she failed (on his own admission) to make the cultural revolution she had set as her key objective, or why she has not taken Sam Brittan's advice on the need for an "onslaught" on the "middle-class welfare state" if the social promise of a radical social market programme is to be fulfilled. The evidence that it has not been fulfilled is (as Brittan also says) there to be seen on the streets.

For those who want chapter and verse, this is provided by Hudson and Williams (*Divided Britain*, Belhaven/Pinter, £30/£8.95). Their conclusion, appropriately gloomy, is that inequality was rife pre-Thatcher, has become rifer during Thatcher, and will be rife post-Thatcher, because that is what capitalism (pace Brittan) does to societies. It is always useful to remember Tawney's old theme: you may be able to choose what kind of society to have, but what you cannot choose is the consequence of that choice. In other words, if you do proceed on the basis that there is no such thing as society, then you should not be surprised when reality starts to take you at your word.

Mind you, the effects of Thatcher have been truly remarkable. Just look at what she has achieved where all others have failed. She has made the unions popular again. She has rallied people to the defence of public ownership (even in the case of the once loathed water boards). She has fired a great movement for constitutional reform. She has converted Little Englanders into enthusiastic Europeans.

Nor is this all. She has reactivated and nourished flagging collective values. And, most wondrous of all, she has performed the miracle which Gaitskell and the rest never managed, of turning the Labour Party into a modern European social democratic party. What a woman!

But of course all this success brings its own consequences. One of these is that Labour may actually win an election again, equipped (as David Marquand puts it in his *New Times* piece) with an outlook just right for the 1960s. It will be a "conjuncture" (notice how effortlessly you can slip into the language) when much remains unclear on the left. Set against the epochal shifts of New Times, a Labour government begins to look like the small change of politics. Certainly, on the evidence so far, the left cannot offer such a government much help, beyond the metaphor of a world in free fall. No wonder that the confidence, excitement and ambition on the left which accompanied the demise of a previous Thirteen Years of Tory Misrule finds no parallel now, only a visceral pleasure at the prospect of sending Her to Dulwich.

Post-Thatcher the left may have to settle for "socialism" as one tributary in a new kind of progressivism

There are so many questions and so few answers. Thatcherism will have cleared much ground, but to be filled by what exactly? Is the New Times a wave to be ridden ambitiously and radically by the left, or is the real task to mount a conservative defence against its incursions? Robert Dahl, once described how, as a graduate student, he suddenly discovered "the deep dark secret of socialists... they had no realistic conception of how to operate an economic order, or for that matter, a democratic political system".

It remains a telling observation. Whatever else, the future is going to be messy and untidy and we had better get a social theory to fit. This will come especially hard for the kind of socialist who hates mess and wants to tidy everything up. Socialists may anyway have to settle for "socialism" as one tributary in a new kind of progressivism. But radicals of the left will have to know what they are doing and have a political strategy to match.

Meanwhile, a Labour government will come and—no doubt—go. After all these years of happy, gloomy release, when the intellectual left has been able to find endless diversion in debating whether socialism is dead, we shall be back to the mundane business of life under Labour, but now in a post-oil economy open to the world. Five pounds to the reader who hears the first cry of betrayal. Just like Old Times. At least some things don't change.

Huff along with Ron

MY TURN
Nancy Reagan (with William Novack)
Weidenfeld & Nicolson £15.95

Francis Wheen

On the Wogan show last week, Nancy Reagan was asked whether it had been entirely wise for her husband to denounce the Soviet Union as an "evil empire". But of course, she replied: "He said that on purpose, to let them know that this was what the American people thought of them and that it would be good if we got together." Follow the logic? Nor, it seems, does she. For on page 64 of her memoirs she says the exact opposite: "his calling the Soviet Union an evil empire was not particularly helpful in establishing a dialogue with the other side."

To judge by this score-settling book, Nancy Reagan has gone through life beset by people who are "not particularly helpful". Almost the entire Cabinet and White House staff, for starters. Jim Baker "leaked constantly" to the press; Ed Meese "made me squirm" and "embarrassed the presidency" with his financial misdemeanours; David Stockman "violated" Ronnie's trust; Ray Donovan was "more of a problem than an asset"; James Watt was "dumb"; Donald Regan was "a serious liability. I told Ronnie repeatedly that he should be fired".

The press was equally unhelpful. During Ronnie's first term, Nancy was often described as a shallow and supercilious airhead whose only interests were shopping for fancy clothes and going out to lunch with her rich friends. These stories, she huffs, "made me damn mad". When she had the White House redecorated at a cost of $1 million, some commentators suggested that she was more interested in improving her own quality of life than that of the unemployed or homeless. "This was so completely different from how I viewed my work that I was devastated. All I could think of was Clare Boothe Luce's famous line that no good deed goes unpunished." More recently, the media "started in on me" again when they discovered that Nancy had sometimes altered Ronnie's schedule on the advice of her astrologer. She was irritated by the fuss. "The idea of consulting an astrologer never struck me as particularly strange."

Then there were her expensive clothes, such as the $25,000 dress she wore to Ronnie's first inauguration. Why was she criticised so often for her wardrobe? The answer is obvious: jealousy. "Some women aren't all that crazy about a woman who wears a size four, and who seems to have no trouble staying slim."

And so it goes on. The famous enmity with Raisa Gorbachev—described as looking "like a prison matron"—is resurrected and justified. At their first meeting Raisa "talked and talked" about Soviet art, about communism, about the American political system. "I wasn't prepared

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Camera Press

A First Lady who defended her man

for this," Nancy sniffs, "and I didn't like it. I had assumed we would talk about personal matters: our husbands, our children..."

It's probably just as well that they didn't, since even the Reagan offspring don't escape Nancy's censorious glare. Ronnie's daughter from his first marriage, Maureen, can be "volatile" and "intimidating". The adopted son, Michael, was often "troubled and rebellious... there were days when I could have killed him". Ron Junior caused Nancy "shock and disappointment" by dropping out of college to be a ballet dancer; he then compounded the offence by living with an older woman, Doria Palimeri ("frankly, I didn't particularly like Doria"). As for Patti, the daughter who was born ("go ahead and count") only seven months after Nancy and Ronnie were married—well, Patti "was a difficult baby from the start" and has been a nuisance ever since. A novel she wrote about a left-wing woman whose right-wing father becomes President was "deeply hurtful".

Ronnie himself is above reproach, of course, apart from that quibble over his "evil empire" speech. Her life "didn't really begin" until she met him, and she defends her man fiercely against all-comers—even gamely denying "that old myth that Ronnie dyes his hair".

Almost the only other people to enjoy her unqualified approval are, bizarrely, our very own Windsors. In Ronnie's study at the White House, she proudly reveals, "practically every surface was covered with photographs of family, friends, and members of the British royal family—Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, the Queen Mother, Prince Charles, Princess Diana, Princess Anne and Mark Phillips, Princess Alexandra and Angus Ogilvy, and Princess Margaret".

What, no Fergie?

Apartheid's calling cards

JESUS IS INDIAN
Agnes Sam
The Women's Press £11.95
THE LAST SUNDAY
Elsa Joubert
Hodder & Stoughton £11.95

Julia Hobsbawm

Violence and Christianity, two of apartheid's calling cards, are exposed in Elsa Joubert's bleak new novel, *The Last Sunday*, and Agnes Sam's outstanding first published volume, *Jesus is Indian and other South African Stories*.

Poppie, Elsa Joubert's award-winning novel of a black servant woman, caused uproar among whites on publication in South Africa, and was said to make hardened government ministers change their outlook (if not their policies). In *The Last Sunday*, originally published in Afrikaans in 1983, she focuses on a remote border community of Boer farmers, and portrays a tense, fragile lifestyle smouldering on the fires of racial segregation.

Dominie Falk, the local pastor, is a Christian fundamentalist with messianic delusions. When he is called to comfort the shocked witness of border violence, who is subsequently killed, Falk is convinced that if he collects bloody clothing from thirty such victims, he can buy back the Lord, not with pieces of silver, but with lives: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth... then we'll be free to take revenge."

Naive fanaticism and blind justification are siblings of apartheid. When the pastor beats up an innocent black boy who ventured out of curiosity into the white man's church, he defends his actions to the distressed black minister as protecting his daughter from "gangsters". When he insists that seven-foot fencing is mounted around the church, he ignores the advice of Duvenhage, an enlightened farmer, who warns that pressures behind the fence will surely build "like water behind a dam wall".

Racists and their language are portrayed unflinchingly, as are their frailties, and fears. At times the translation seemed blunt, its bitter simplicity lacking any emotional let-up. Yet whether she is describing a simple social ritual or a father grappling with the awareness that his son played a part in his own death, Elsa Joubert's uncompromising deftness is gripping, in a gloomy, doomed, way.

Agnes Sam grew up in Port Elizabeth and now lives in York. She is the great-granddaughter of an indentured Indian labourer—one of thousands of Muslims and ocean-fearing Hindus, who were shipped to Natal after the abolition of slavery as "official requisition for stores or goods from abroad". "And They Christened it Indenture", the final story in her acute collection, *Jesus is Indian and Other South African Stories*, calls for this post-slave slavery to be

Camera Press

A taste of South Africa: a bitter divide

identified and given its true name.

The theme connecting these stories is the survival of migrant South African Indian women, whose history is largely unwritten. The subheading, "South African", is actually dropped inside the book's jacket, and settings also include Europe. Subtle and adroit, these tales of religious intolerance, the nuances of parent/child relationships, violence, and the bonds of friendship, read with intensity, and the natural flow of folklore, in voices which can be taut with grief or devastatingly funny.

Children, normally given a back seat in fiction, open the collection, with wonderfully loud voices. In "High Heels", Ruthie struggles to fully understand the secret of the Hindu prayer room in her house; Angelina shrewdly outwits her teacher in the book's eponymous story, as she defies the instruction to use English when describing her mother: "I say Hama for my Hama. Because Hama says Jesus is Indian because Jesus wear a dhoti and Jesus can understand our language."

In "A Bag of Sweets" and "The Well-Loved Woman", the relationship between sisters alters profoundly through inter-racial marriage. Friends learn to reunite after a lifetime's separation in "Nana and Devi". The funniest story, "Two Women", about a sharp black woman unwittingly captured by a white woman, is also a reminder never to overlook your own bargaining power.

Until now, Agnes Sam has only seen her selected writings appear in print in England, with Sheba Feminist Publishers, and Virago Press. Yet for years her short fiction has been published elsewhere in Europe. Several years ago she completed a novel. Judging from this fine collection, its publication here seems overdue.

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Shocking talents

A PILGRIM SOUL: THE LIFE AND WORK OF ELISABETH LUTYENS
Meirion and Susie Harries
Michael Joseph £20

Janet Barron

Five minutes before Radio Four's *Start the Week* was to go out live, Elisabeth Lutyens warned Russell Harty that if he "so much as mouthed the phrase 'lady composer'" she would refer to him as a "homosexual interviewer". The bad taste was entirely intentional, for Liz Lutyens's public persona was designed to shock the audience and upset their cultural values. In *A Pilgrim Soul* her biographers Meirion and Susie Harries reconstruct the many stories which circulated about this avant-garde artist. The result is a fresh and fascinating narrative peopled by the inevitable regulars of Fitzrovia, but enjoyably free of nostalgic stereotypes.

Nicholas Ridley, Liz Lutyens's nephew, was summoned to act as chauffeur to drive her home after a concert. He arrived to find his aunt resplendent in butterfly specs, patterned tights and an electric-blue fake-fur coat, with Stevie Smith in an old black frock at her side. In her seventies, Liz jetted off with Ridley's estranged wife to Corfu, becoming the star attraction in the Greek nights at the taverna. She had the talent to enchant, but also to inflict excruciating embarrassment, hoicking up her skirts in public to demonstrate the superiority of tights instead of stockings.

The authors here strip away the protective garments which Elisabeth Lutyens carefully donned and reveal her as a vulnerable and appealing personality who longed, beneath the razzmatazz, for people to like her. As a child she had recorded of a Christmas pantomime in a world-weary tone, "Peter and Wendy too old", and it is an indication of her social origins that J M Barrie was a family friend.

At boarding school she dressed up as Peter Pan for the end-of-term ball, shocking her teachers by her unladylike garb. Passion to be creative was irreconcilable with need to prove herself as an adult woman to her family, and she gave birth to her children screaming at the midwife, "But I still want to compose, fuck you!"

One note of weakness in this excellent biography is the authors' tendency to take Liz's anti-feminism on her own terms. While her repartee with Russell Harty proclaims her commitment to serious composition, her defiant assertion that she is only incidentally a woman could have been more fully explored. A large part of the discrimination she experienced (and exaggerated) was the result of assumptions about her privileged social position, as critics and BBC producers imagined she had been provided for by her father, the architect Sir Edwin, and her second husband Edward Clark.

In fact, though never as poor as she made out, Elisabeth Lutyens turned to commercial hack work to finance her own creativity and to support, to some extent, her children and the depressing Edward. Frustrated in her ambitions to compose modernist music, she relied on providing the scores for horror films and commercials. While only seven original works (one for each decade of her life) were given professional recordings, she found herself with the resources of a full orchestra for three hours to rehearse a 30-second jingle for Be-Ro flour.

In analysing the clashes between public service and commercial broadcasting, however, this is a timely and stimulating study. Edward Clark tried to hail a taxi to the BBC in Portland Place, and the cabbie asked him if he was the man responsible for broadcasting Bach's cantatas. Modestly claiming the credit, Edward found himself dumped on the pavement. He and Liz had faith in themselves as part of the vanguard of contemporary music, endorsed by the Reithian ideal of improving as well as reflecting public taste. The cultural dilemmas in this book embody its only note of a world sadly lost, for where Lutyens and her contemporaries mocked the BBC as middlebrow, the danger is that it may soon cease to have a brow at all.

Sci fi schmaltz

CASABLANCA
Michael Moorcock
Victor Gollancz £13.95

Ian Bostridge

Casablanca is certainly a name to conjure with. It radiates that synthetic exoticism which the Orient can preeminently supply. It has at its beck and call all the lush Hollywood sentimentality of Bogart, Bergman and Rick's *Cafe Americain*.

And there's no reason to accuse Michael Moorcock of dishonesty in attaching this glamorous epithet to his new collection of short fiction and non-fiction. The title story, a disconcerting mixture of earnestness, mystery and schmaltz, is certainly suffused with an awareness that Arabian tales by western writers are playing with a set of deceptively simple stereotypes. Like some latter-day Scheherezade, Moorcock spins out the tale with comment on Middle Eastern politics and western perfidy. He recognises the danger of fantasising about the east, but in the end can't escape the generalisations of the thriller genre which he's imitating, or its fumbling approach to sexual desire.

Moorcock has increasingly tried to distance himself from science-fiction. That makes it all the more striking that the best parts of these stories are the inventive conceits from which science-fiction stems. It's the execution that usually flops.

The most interesting story in the anthology, "Hanging the Fool", has more reminders of Bogart, with its adventure plot reminiscent of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, and a gimmick—a map tattooed on a piece of human flesh—which might have come out of Roald Dahl. It's also choc-a-bloc once more with a mysterious Orient straight out of the old advertisements for Fry's Turkish Delight. The resolution has a certain poetic justice, as the villainous owner of the said map is flayed alive. Nevertheless the story has all the faults which run through so much of the book—the knowing style, clumsily enunciated historical or exotic location, banal use of psychological landscape, breathless introduction of people and places.

This is the point at which we have to ask why Moorcock has chosen to reprint a variety of ephemera, book reviews and the like, the sort of pieces which most hacks are happy to regard as disposable. They range from appreciations of other writers like Angus Wilson and Andrea Dworkin, to stuff on Why I am a Feminist, via prescriptions for the future of London.

Perhaps the reason for the failure of Moorcock's stories is to be found here, though I doubt that's why he included them. Moorcock's stories don't embody the approach to life which the interpolated passages of earnest didacticism would lead one to expect. At one point, Moorcock talks about men taking the part of women in order to give authority to the woman's voice. This formula is, like *Casablanca*, an evasion of the problems he has set himself.

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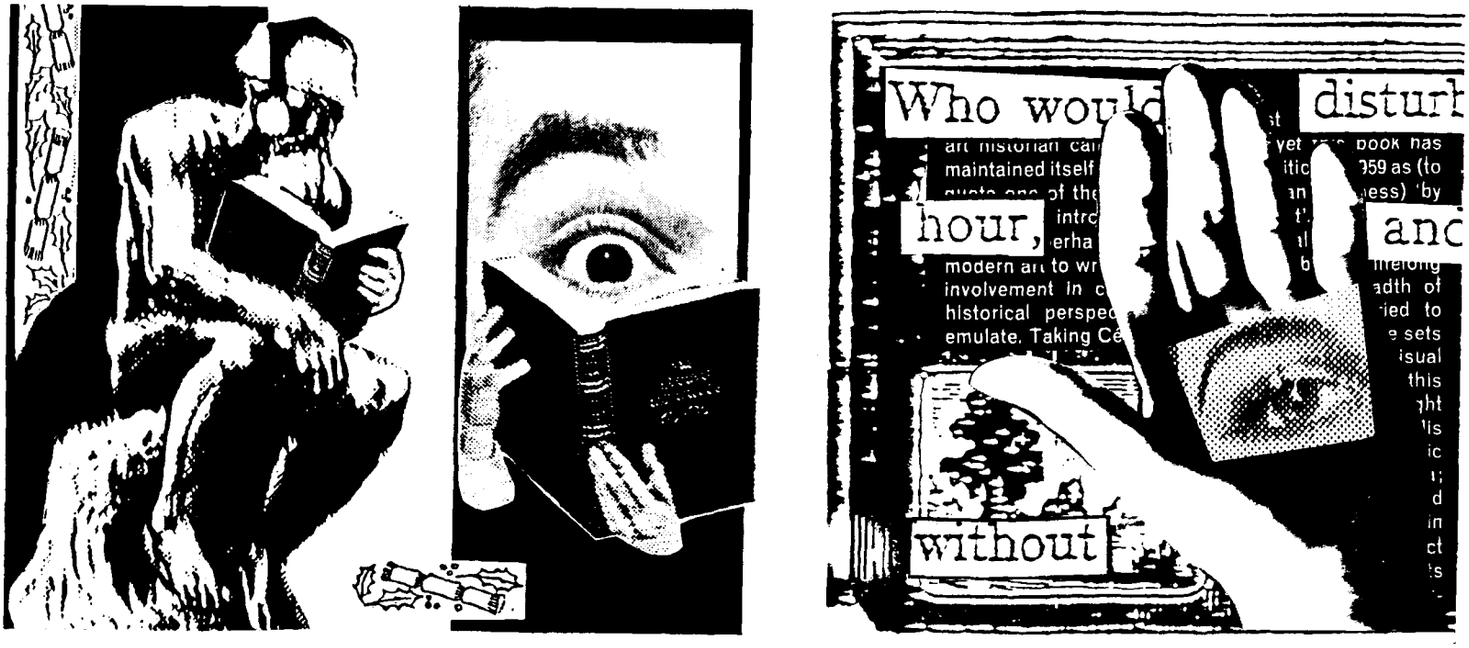

Books for a lifetime

Emma Tennant

My favourite book is *The Odyssey* as it can be picked up and enjoyed anywhere, its seas and skies supplanting the drearier locations. I also enjoy Samuel Butler's theory of feminine authorship of *The Odyssey*. His argument (supported by Robert Graves) hinged among much else on the wealth of domestic detail in the book, and on the fact that Odysseus, on descending to Hades, is met by a procession of distinguished women. Thus (unsurprisingly) the first novelist was a woman.

Ben Pimlott

Favourite books are the ones you think about, recommend to people and steal from. I like George Orwell's anarchistic blast against conformity in *Nineteen Eighty–Four*, William Faulkner's account of non-rational feeling in *The Sound and The Fury*, Primo Levi's demonstration that the human spirit can be stronger than the maddest tyranny in *If This Is A Man*, and Paul Fussell's scholarly reminder that literary imagination is the scene-setter for human savagery in *The Great War and Modern Memory*. None of these books are exactly seasonal or jolly but all—perhaps surprisingly—are hopeful.

Fleur Adcock

Favourite books *ever*? Impossible. Some of my old editions of poets (Donne, Milton, Blake, Eliot) are pretty battered, but that happened in my teens, when I had less choice and more time to indulge obsessions. The only volume I've actually worn out more recently is Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journals*, my permanent bedside book when I spent a year in Ambleside.

Maureen Duffy

Ever since I first close encountered him as a student I have loved the poems of John Donne, whom Ben Jonson, in his proto-*Guardian* Conversation with William Drummond, called "the first poet in the world for some things". I love him not just as the poet of passion and complexity but as a supreme stylist, for the sinuous energy of his lines, and because, nearly 400 years ago, he showed in his thought and imagery that the division between art and science is false, and that both are necessary and linked manifestations of the human imagination that can complement and enrich each other.

Francis Wheen

It is hard to laugh at the gob-smacked awe with which certain critics receive, say, *Foucault's Pendulum* or *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*. "Challenges the idea of the novel," they gasp. "Redefines the nature of authorship ... Playful ... Digressive ... Post-modern ..." For almost all the tricks and caprices that are now hailed as post-modern can be found in Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* which was written more than 200 years ago. It is a masterpiece of "transverse zigzaggery" (to use a phrase of Uncle Toby's)—squiggly, hobby-horsical, sentimental and madly comic. I adore it wholeheartedly.

Maggie Gee

I've decided to choose favourite books by living writers which cuts out Dickens, Woolf and Nabakov. *1982, Janine* by Alisdair Gray is an extraordinary work, entertaining, shocking and moving by turns, which links sado-masochistic pornography to the bondage of nuclear weaponry and says that our need for both comes from a failure of tenderness. *The Gift of Stones* by Jim Crace is equally original. A universal story set in the Stone Age about love, work and being an outsider, written in striking rhythmical prose.

Dave Hill

Joseph Heller's *Something Happened*: sustained, breathtaking, middle-American existential angst—cheers me up no end. Raymond Chandler's *The Long Goodbye*: crime novel that deserves the name, with its good plot, delicious language and use of the conventions of the genre to convey the tainted flavour of its LA times. Also, it reminds me of Altman's 1970s movie adaptation with Eliot Gould—something of a role model!

Marina Warner

Harry Mulisch's short novel *The Assault* tells a powerful story about the repercussions of a resistance coup in Nazi-occupied Holland. His viewpoint is bleak, his ironies multiple, he doesn't flinch from the hard truths involved, and at the same time his storytelling never misses a step. *Beloved* awed me and moved me, and gave me real pleasure too, in spite of the harshness of its theme. Toni Morrison has forged a poetic, inward language of her own to create a unique modern allegory about slavery and America. Primo Levi's humane, level discernment lit up everything he wrote, and I still mind his suicide as if he'd been a friend. His last book, *Other Men's Trades*, a collection of his newspaper pieces, reveals gentle humour as well as all the qualities—honesty, courage, lack of sentiment—of his key testimonial, *If This Is A Man*.

Anthony Quinn

Two books I wouldn't want to be without are Pauline Kael's *5001 Nights At The Movies*, a compendium of short reviews by cinema's most entertaining and imaginative critic. Her judgment is occasionally off the beam, but the supercharged prose is a constant delight. The other is Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair*. I don't often re-read books, but this one has returned to haunt my bedside a number of times—passionate, tender, truthful, heartbreakingly sad.

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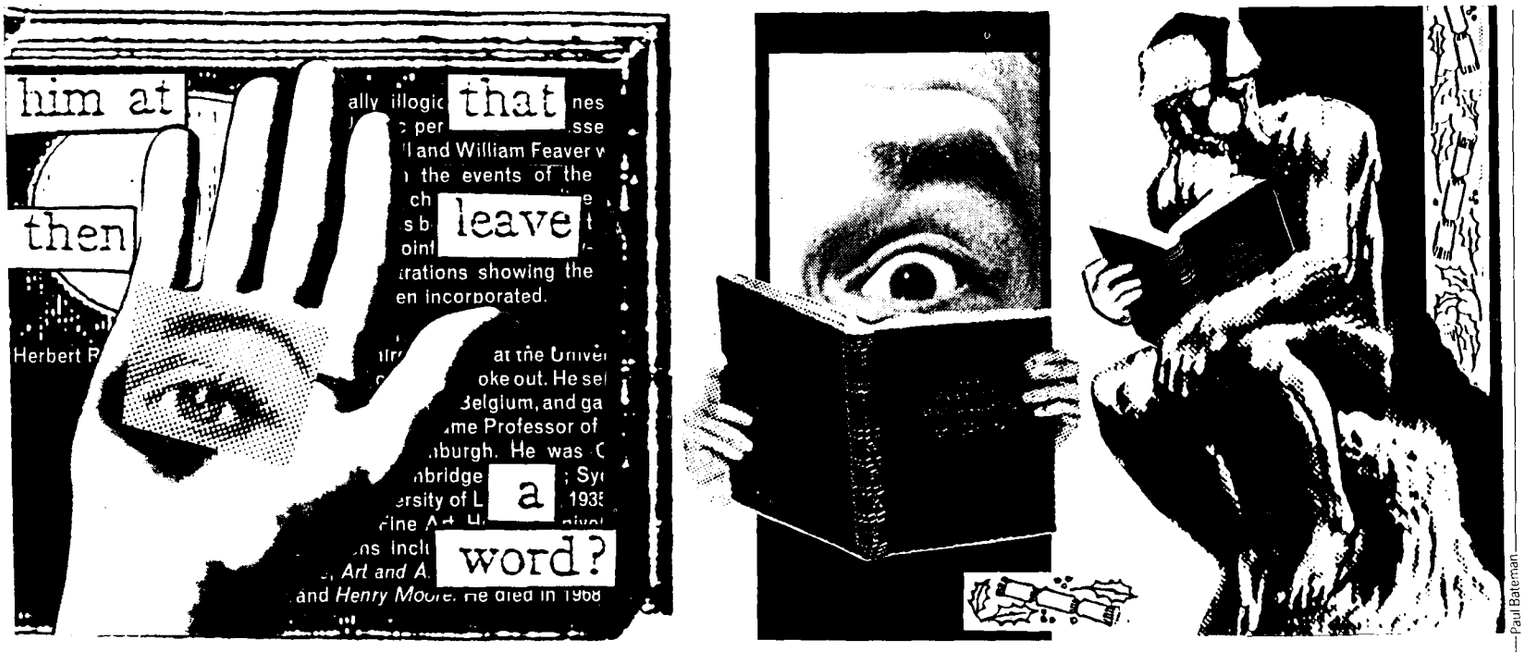

Carol Rumens

Eva Hoffman's autobiography, *Lost in Translation: A New Life in a New Language* is a recent title, but irrevocably set to be one of my all-time favourite books. It's a kind of metaphysical and linguistic "quest" story in which Hoffman, a Polish immigrant to North America, has first to lose her identity to the new language in order to find it again. She describes the process in exquisite, symbolically resonant English prose that any native must envy. I am reminded of another book that I loved, but now can't find (help!), a beautiful little autobiography about life in pre- and post-war Czechoslovakia, *The House on Prague Street*, by Hana Demetz. If this suggests that my favourite genre is autobiography, it's misleading: what I love most is a good dictionary, and here Leo Rostein's *The Joys of Yiddish* is my shining light.

Angela McRobbie

I enjoyed, in 1989, Elizabeth Young-Bruehl's *Anna Freud: A Biography*, particularly for its vivid account of Anna Freud's work with disturbed children in Hampstead Clinic, which she set up soon after her arrival in this country. I read Zygmunt Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* as a timely reminder of the holocaust as a product of the forces of modernity rather than a barbarity within "civilisation".

David Widgery

Tony Cliff's *State Capitalism in Russia* first appeared in duplicated form 40 years ago. Since then, it has been reprinted, under several titles, under many names, in many languages, including Turkish, Japanese and Farsi. Written when Stalin and Stalinism was at its apogee, it, alone, predicted the type of convulsions which now shake eastern Europe. The work of an extramural Marxist autodidact who speaks a thousand words of ten languages, it is perennially inspiring. I also read *Don't Put Mustard in the Custard* and the *Michelin Road Map of France* quite a lot.

Zoe Fairbairns

The Handmaid's Tale: first, it's the credit cards. If they're owned by women, the computer spits them out. The women are fired from paid employment. In the olden days, in 1986, I found Margaret Atwood's exquisitely written dystopia somewhat far-fetched. Now, with growing awareness of religious fundamentalism as a weapon of patriarchy, I wonder. I would never have risen to the rank of Handmaid—they are young women of proven fertility. I doubt that I would be much sought after as a docile Wife or a domesticated Martha. Would I dare to die a martyr's death as Unwoman...or would I end up policing the others as an Aunt?

John Lucas

Given that "favourite books" must mean books you'd want to have by you whatever your mood or condition, the vast majority of books are ruled out. Two that remain are: Auden's mistitled *Oxford Book of Light Verse*, which is easily the most enjoyable, eclectic anthology in the language; and Cassell's *Natural History*.

There may be a bit of cheating involved in this, because it runs to six volumes. On the other hand, in the twenty or so years since I bought all six—for £4 in a local junk shop—I've come to think of them as one book, an endless source of information and delight. Did you know that there's a shellfish called "haliotis" and that although it lacks an operculum the lobe of its left mantle is elongated to an anal siphon? This is the well-argued case for a plenipotentiary universe and the argument from design in a sea-shell.

Carole Angier

One or two favourite books—you must be joking! At least it'll have to be like Desert Island Discs: bound volumes. One of all the Primo Levi, please, and one of all of Elias Canetti. And so I don't die of gloom one of all of Nancy Mitford.

Anthony Wright

Not sure about "favourite", but... Orwell's *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters* (4 vols) because they are compulsory for the century; and Steven Lukes and Itzhak Galnoor's *No Laughing Matter: A Collection of Political Jokes* because all of eastern Europe (and more) is there.

Joan Smith

I'm tremendously fond of Elizabeth Bowen—the unhurried pace at which her narratives unfold, and her capacity to convey feeling. My favourite is *The Death of the Heart*, which contrives to be hauntingly sad and funny at the same time.

I'm also a great fan of the crime novels of Cecil Day Lewis, written under the pseudonym Nicholas Blake. They're wildly opinionated, the plots are sometimes ludicrous, but at his best he makes most other crime writers look insipid. *The Beast Must Die*, first published in 1938, is probably the most gripping thriller I've ever read.

Caroline Moorehead

In 1943 Primo Levi, a young chemist from Turin and a partisan, was caught by the fascist militia and sent, with 124 other Jews, to Auschwitz. Only three came home. One of these was Primo Levi, who returned to write two remarkable books, poetically clear and intensely sad, *If This Is A Man* and *The Truce*—the first a descent into a nightmare, the second the escape from it, and the start of a life's work on the concentration camps which continued, in fact and fiction, for the rest of his life. These two moving books should be read together.

And my choice of favourite—and very strange—novel goes to Irene Handl who, after many years as a comic actress, turned her hand to a story, *The Sioux*, an extraordinary book, at once tragic and very funny, with an odd twist of language quite unlike anything else I have ever read.

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Julie Burchill

The best biography of this or any other year was *The Lives of John Lennon* by Albert Goldman. Professor Goldman's writing is as sharp as a shiv and as glittery as broken glass, but with a backbeat of great humanity. I love the way he makes hamburgers out of all the sacred cows of the sixties—the hippies have had things their way for too long. This was the year I discovered Patrick Hamilton, who is now my favourite writer of all time—*Slaves of Solitude* is one of his best, *Mr Stimpson and Mr Gorse* even better. Hamilton writes beautifully about sad lives without being a miserabilist and wallowing in it, which is very difficult. And Shena Mackay is undoubtedly the greatest living British writer. Her best book is *Redhill Roccoco* and she has *never* written a dud.

Lucy Ellmann

I like Lawrence Sterne, Thomas Bernhard and Molly Keane, for their expertly controlled whackiness, which I would emulate if I could. And my mother's book on sexist literary criticism, *Thinking About Women*, is for many reasons a book which I consider a prerequisite for life.

Amanda Hopkinson

Just before the 200th anniversary year of the French Revolution slips away, a mention of two books now available in English translation. George Sand, described by Charlotte Bronte as "clever, wicked, sophisticated and immoral", was never more so than in her "mature novel", *Marianne*.

Emile Zola is another 19th century author of hitherto hidden talents. Two of his grandsons have compiled an album of Zola the photographer, with 208 plates of his portraits, his pastimes, his Paris. Not only a new dimension on a grand man of letters, but a delightful—and often innovatory—record of his places, people and photographic techniques too.

Diana Souhami

I read Anita Brookner's *Latecomers* twice, straight off. The story is bereaved, compassionate and like a beautiful sepia photograph. It's about two boys who are put on a train for Britain, out of Nazi Berlin, by their doomed parents. The boys then shape their lives as best they can. I know Anita Brookner hasn't come to terms with the late 20th century and her feminism needs revising, but her books are treasures.

Rereading Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* made me wistful for Paris in the twenties where even writers without much money could live well, and eat in the cafes, and publishing wasn't all about multiple takeovers and the Frankfurt Book Fair and bestsellers like *Money*, which I didn't enjoy.

Robert Carver

Anthology of hope, despair, memory, poetry, travel and love; small enough to slip into a pocket as one prepares to flee the country yet again, varied enough to sustain life on the dreariest alien shore—Cyril Connolly's *The Unquiet Grave*. If I could be someone else who would I wish to be? Lord Byron, of course, and the 12 volumes of letters and prose are proof positive; a handy one-volume anthology is a manageable alternative. "In order to be assured of encountering nothing more disgusting, one must swallow a toad first thing each morning": like champagne, or good Darjeeling, the maxims and anecdotes of Chamfort never fail to stimulate and comfort.

Thrushes, sage and juniper

THE FUTURIST COOKBOOK
Marinetti
Trefoil Publications £14.99

Christopher Driver

This Futurist classic, comparable for originality with *Façade* and for combativeness with Andre Breton, was published in the year of my birth and on my 57th birthday this month I was at last able to read it in English. All honour to Trefoil, publishers of contemporary design, not only for the book's production which makes Pentagram look dowdy, but for showing up British culture vultures, whose food education stopped at MacDonalds University.

It is hard to know whom to reproach most: the left-inclined artists and writers who cast Marinetti and his circle into outer darkness because they were born on the anarcho-fascist side of the Italian blanket; or the *nouvelle* chefs and food writers who pat each other for their gustatory sensibility and know so little 20th century history.

Lesley Chamberlain's intelligent introduction refers to the Futurist "aeropainters" who by their writings and their performance art tried to breach the last barricade of popular conservatism (food). But she can still write, in August 1989, "The first time I approached Marinetti's work I took it for a cookbook"—as though Elizabeth David in *Italian Food* (1954) had never written at length about *La Cucina Futurista* (1932) and its principal author—and perhaps she missed the Royal Academy's vast *Italian Art in the 20th Century* show in the spring of this year.

Did we really need a food-and-decor journalist "for suggesting the translation" when Jane Grigson, a prizewinning translator from the Italian, could have done it on her head at any time, if London cookery editors had not been too busy reeling out otiose glossies by yellowing Greens, illiterate stovies, cookery school entrepreneurs, and frenchified chefs puffed up as high as their own vol-au-vents?

Never mind, Suzanne Brill's version reads better than I expected from the French edition (and the tardy French have even less to congratulate themselves on). True, Marinetti himself was his worst enemy, what with his flirtation with the early Mussolini, and his extravagant campaign against *pasta asciutta*. (But Labour Party stalwarts of the same period who fell for the young Oswald Mosley, and a British public that regards sausages and mash as food suitable for a civilised nation, can hardly hurl the first stone...) Besides, if *NSS* readers are squeamish about the Futurist Aeropoet in person, what about the up-to-the-minute food-political "line" of his supporter V G Pennino: "Every nation must have its own way of eating and that of the Italian people must be based on the produce of this warm, restless, volcanic land; it should therefore be three-quarters composed of the marvellous vegetable products for which we are envied throughout the world and a scant quarter of animal products"?

In the book, the Futurist—or in some cases, Dadaist—menus and recipes represent less than half the whole; just as the sense of excitement is hard to understand without contemplating the painting of Marinetti's contemporaries, especially Boccioni and Balla, Carra and Fillia. (Compare the current grotesque valuation on Post-Impressionist painting with the Italian Futurists' brave preoccupation with the historical moment: mechanism, movement, metal, noise.)

But *revenons à nos moutons*, or whatever the Aeropainters propose for a properly Modernist Christmas (if that feast itself is permitted in such circles). For a dynamic dinner, they suggest:

1) "The Running Step": composed of rice, rum and red pepper.

2) "In Top Gear": 200 threads of spun sugar wound up in a ball, wrapped in slices of pineapple and drowned in Asti spumante.

3) "Car Crash": a hemisphere of pressed anchovies joined to a hemisphere of date puree, the whole wrapped up in a large, very thin slice of ham marinated in Marsala.

4) "Losing a Wheel": four thrushes (I suppose you could substitute quail) roasted with a great deal of juniper and sage, one with its head missing, wrapped up and rolled into a ball inside a slice of polenta sprayed with eau de Cologne.

5) "Hand Grenades": a ball of Cremona nougat wrapped in a large, very rare steak, sprinkled with Muscat wine.

The guests are to compete for the food, "the most skillful will be the one who, taking inspiration from Umberto Boccioni's great picture *The Football Player*, manages to grab twenty or so edible balls and head for the open country".

If that sounds too strenuous, heterosexual couples might consider the art critic P A Saladin's recipe illustrated above, called Manandwomanatmidnight. "Pour some red zabaglione onto a round plate so as to form a large pool. In the middle of this place a nice big onion ring transfixed by a stalk of candied angelica. Then lay out two candied chestnuts, as shown, and serve one plate per couple."

Marinetti (born in Alexandria) was not innocent of misogyny and militarism, both. But he was no racist and he looks very content with his daughters in his photographs. One of them still lives in Rome, handling his rights.

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Art, kitsch and sponsors

From auctions to video art, John A Walker guides us through the 80s

Art Fairs: Invented by German dealers in the sixties, Art Fairs proliferated in the eighties and became increasingly international in scope as cities like London, Madrid and Los Angeles competed to mount the biggest shows. Their purpose was to enlarge the market for contemporary art even if this meant unloading a lot of kitsch on to the new class of yuppies with high disposable incomes.

Auctions: The art market in both old and new art boomed in the eighties. Sotheby's, the auction house, fuelled the boom by loaning money to purchasers. In the salerooms super rich collectors vied with one another to pay the most: Van Gogh's *Irises* fetched $53 million.

Black Art: Work by Afro-Caribbean and Asian artists, reflecting the experience of being black in a white-dominated society, received unprecedented attention in the eighties. The work revealed a new confidence on the part of artists from Britain's ethnic minorities, but some black artists objected to the category: they wanted to be judged simply as artists regardless of origin. However, white and black artists happily contributed to "Artists Against Apartheid" exhibitions, while in South Africa itself black artists created vital images and sculptures that were dubbed "Township Art".

Business Sponsorship: Corporate patronage of the arts became much more important in the eighties as the government encouraged a shift from public to private funding. Between 1976 and 1988 the sum spent by business increased from £600,000 to £33 million. Virtually all arts companies, public museums and exhibitions came to rely in part on sponsorship money. Fund raisers were in short supply. Most multinational companies sponsored the arts, but they favoured the prestigious rather than the avant-garde.

Curators: Norman Rosenthal of the Royal Academy exemplified the new breed of super curators who masterminded massive thematic exhibitions. With the *New Spirit in Painting* show in 1981, he introduced neo-expressionism to Britain. Later he mounted a series of nationalistic shows—German Art, Italian Art, and British Art.

Exhibition Catalogues: In the eighties blockbuster exhibitions were invariably accompanied

Greg Becket

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by thick, glossy, expensive catalogues. Scholarly texts attempted to redress the intellectual weaknesses of the shows themselves but, in the process, catalogues ceased to be exhibition guides. These prestige objects were generally subsidised by business and co-published by the museums and Prestel Verlag of Munich.

Global Art: "Globalisation" became a fashionable idea amongst cultural theorists. The term "world music" was introduced. In the visual arts the first exhibition that was global in scope, *Magicians of the Earth*, was presented in Paris; it treated third-world and first-world artists on an equal footing. Also, the advent of international computer networks encouraged artists like Roy Ascott to devise interactive artworks. He called this "telematics".

Heritage Industry: An expression used to describe a movement associated with the decline of Britain's industrial base—instead of goods Britain produced a commodity called "heritage". During the eighties conservation, preservation and heritage organisations flourished; more and more museums were opened which retailed a sanitised image of the past.

Museums: For museums the period was a paradoxical decade of crisis and expansion. Many public museums were strapped for cash; their purchasing funds were diminished by ever rising saleroom prices; their treasures were in danger because objects needed conservation and buildings needed urgent repairs; they were compelled to seek sponsorship, market themselves and introduce entrance charges (which reduced attendances). At the V & A the new broom director, Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, caused a furore when she "restructured" the institution by sacking a number of scholars.

Meanwhile, the private sector funded new museums, eg, Conran's Design Museum and the Museum of the Moving Image in London.

Neo-Geo: Short for "neo-geometric"; also called fakism, smart art and simulation art. A New York movement of the mid-eighties intended to supplant neo-expressionism, the style which had dominated the early eighties. A cool, cynical form of art produced by artists like Peter Halley, Jeff Koons, Heim Steinbach and Ashley Bickerton. Influenced by the postmodernist theorist Jean Baudrillard and the work of Duchamp and Warhol, the neo-geoists painted the circuitry of contemporary life, made reliefs from corporate logos, presented consumer products as art, and revelled in kitsch and commodity fetishism.

New British Sculpture: Work by artists like David Mach, Bill Woodrow and Tony Cragg. It achieved international success in the early eighties that was at once critical, commercial and popular. Several of the sculptors employed a witty, bricolage technique: they recycled and transformed waste found in abundance in London's streets in spite of Mrs Thatcher's anti-litter gestures. Mach's 1983 Polaris submarine made from old tyres provoked one irate viewer to arson; tragically he burnt himself to death.

New Technologies: Video art was a child of the sixties but it was only in the eighties that it achieved widespread acceptance. New video-editing suites enabled artists to manipulate images in the way musicians manipulate sounds. Channel 4 presented international surveys of video art and a pioneer of the medium—Nam June Paik—was honoured with a show at the Hayward. A festival of video art was held in Liverpool and in Germany a major exhibition was devoted to video sculpture. The popularity of rock music video and scratch video enlarged the audience for video made by fine artists.

There was also a boom in copy art as artists exploited the potential of new colour photocopying machines. Computer graphics were a growth area too, particularly in the art of animation, at which Britain excelled. David Hockney appeared on TV playing with the magical Quantel Paintbox. Since most new technologies facilitated copying and mass reproduction, they challenged the fine art values of single authorship, originality, unique artefacts and copyright.

Public Art: Ironically, during a period when political support for the public sector declined, public art became fashionable again. Arts Councils and businesses preferred to fund public projects, rather than give "no strings" grants to artists.

There was a noticeable decline in support for community art: "the public" was seen as a wider and less contentious category. Outside of London, natural settings for public art were preferred as more sculptures featured in garden festivals. In the cities new, higher quality office developments provided settings for sculptures, eg, London's Broadgate includes sculptures by the Americans, George Segal and Richard Serra. London Underground also commissioned tube station mosaics from Eduardo Paolozzi.

Saatchi Collection: By spending millions of pounds derived from advertising, Charles and Doris Saatchi assembled at high speed a huge collection of contemporary art. Their private wealth exposed the poverty of the public sector (Tate Gallery). In 1985 they opened the Saatchi Collection. At first they invested heavily in European neo-expressionist and American art; more recently their attention has switched to British art. Charles Saatchi purchased whole one-person exhibitions and even art movements (eg, neo-geo). His profligacy contributed greatly to the tremendous inflation in the market value of art in the eighties.

School of London: A much disputed term applied to figurative painters resident in London, eg, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach and Ron Kitaj. The label has been used by artists, publishers and dealers; it performs a packaging and marketing function just like "School of Paris". Worthy British artists were much vaunted in the eighties by the critic Peter Fuller who founded a new magazine, *Modern Painters*.

Sovart: The name of a company set up to export contemporary Soviet art to the west. In the sixties and seventies non-state art in the USSR was dubbed "unofficial", "dissident" or "samizdat". During the decade a thriving market for Soviet art was established in the west and hundreds of Russian artists came to live and work in the United States. Home grown Soviet art is now widely shown and sold outside the USSR. The dramatic changes in eastern Europe will no doubt prompt a similar surge of interest in the art of these countries among western dealers and curators.

Opinion

Postmodern paralysis

Taste and value have crept back into art, Suzanne Moore argues

This week *Smash Hits* included a pull-out poster of Jason Donavon. They also ran a feature "Is Jason Donavon a dunderhead?". They asked the hapless but ever-happy Jason to do a general knowledge test. He scored a rather miserable four out of ten. No comment was made. There was no need.

By contrast the *Guardian* ran a lengthy profile on him in the space normally reserved for political figures. In the rather bemused way that papers like the *Guardian* approach popular culture, they tried to analyse the secret of his success. It was, they concluded, his incredible blandness. You don't say?

Yet Jason *is* very ordinary. Somehow his fame has to be accounted for. Shouldn't we be glad that all those progressive ideas about people's everyday culture being valuable and relevant and worthy of serious discussion have, by the end of the decade, permeated the mainstream? Shouldn't we rejoice that you can't move for arts programmes and colour supplements that deconstruct every cultural product from Kylie to Koons, from Perrier to Potter?

If it was all done with the panache of *Smash Hits* things might be OK. But it's not. *Smash Hits* engages with its readers from *within* pop culture and in this way can provide a kind of auto-critique, a running critical commentary without being patronising or pretentious. Isn't this what it really means to take popular culture seriously?

Throughout the eighties we have moved into culture in a big way. Meaghan Morris wrote:

Oliver Maxwell

More to style than images? In the mid-eighties *The Face* ran a feature on the trappings of terror called "Beirut Fashion"

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"In 1975 everything was, oppressively, Political. By 1985 everything has become, obscurely, Cultural." On television a whole run of arts and culture programmes were introduced. Some good, some bad. But we're talking quantity not quality here. Now we could talk culture non-stop Alice Walker and Andy Warhol in the same breath. Wow.

Then, just as we'd managed to separate culture from politics completely—something that the right knew never to bother to try—someone burned a book, and culture got banged up against not just politics, but religion, race, the whole damn kaboodle. A generation of intellectuals and academics creaked into action. Magazines like this one could even relive their youth. OK so I know about fundamentalism and there is nothing more fundamental than freedom of speech, but I can't help wondering what would have happened if Barbara Cartland had written *The Satanic Verses*.

Instead it was Salman Rushdie. A literary man with impeccable class credentials, a proper author. Would the same eloquent and moving defence have been proffered if the offending writer was the author of trashy novels? If she wore leopard print shoulder pads and stilettos? When the shit hits the fan you're better off being a fan of high culture, of Art with a capital A.

This might seem suprising because we do endlessly read about the P-word (postmodernism) and how there is no longer any distinction between high and low culture. Theoretically, at least, postmodernism seems to contain the seeds of a cultural democratisation. We all have access to this incredible jumble of ideas and styles that is the 20th century. In theory we can all read these multiple texts, play with our identities and have mystical experiences in shopping malls.

Problems with straightforward sexism in the latest blockbuster? Hey, try these amazing 3-D postmodern spectacles and you'll see things differently. What you thought was sexism was actually an an incredibly ironic and nuanced intertextual reference to a film which was itself a pastiche on commodity fetishism. Confused? Fine, that after all *is* the postmodern condition.

Whatever its uses—and I think these ideas are at times extremely valuable—the one thing that postmodernism is unable to deal with is relationships between people. It's very good at talking about the complexities of subjectivity, but hopeless at talking about intersubjectivity—the actual relations between people. It is as if we are at the point where we can only relate to a screen: a television, a computer, an image and never ever to each other.

Instead, as we go into the nineties a reverse, or at least slowing down, of some of these trends seems to be happening. After the days when you could win a chunk of the Berlin Wall in a competition in the *Sun* (what could be more cultural politics than that?), there will have to be a reassessment of what has passed for left cultural politics. After the free-for-all idea that it was somehow intrinsically radical to discuss popular culture, old questions are again being asked. Questions about cultural value, about the quality of the culture that we make and take. Just because we understand the appeal of James Bond, does that mean we have to embrace it?

Ann Barr Snitow said that in matters of popular culture, you are not what you eat and it's true. But that doesn't mean you don't get sick of it. Even *The Face*, the root of all evil or an inconsequential style magazine depending on how you see it, has ended the decade asking us to send faxes to China. Issues like China, eastern Europe, the green movement, another famine, are so obviously about more than style, more than superficiality, more than images, that everyone now has to "get real".

Part of that reality will, I hope, involve a cultural politics which is what it says it is—a politics of, from amd within culture. The eighties have been a celebration of popular culture through tracing the spurious and fleeting strands of resistance that can be found. The result, though dressed up in all kinds of ways, has been a degree of acceptance that culture as we know it is unchanging, so that we might as well get used to it, warts and all.

But, in the nineties, I don't want my culture warts and all. And I certainly don't want Jason Donovan. Is that really too much to ask for?

Television

Attack of the vulgars

Get right to the heart of the decade with Paul Morley

You might have noticed that there have been crazy scores of new hip print attempts to get the point of the eighties. List it, label it, lose it, strangle it: naturally enough, we've all been encouraged to take part in the first and last postmortem, a mass judging of appearances.

As always, the best and worst way to get to the heart of the matter of the eighties (as much as there really was such a thing) is to watch television. A few days' concentrated screengazing over the Christmas period, watching programmes that consciously or not fling the ups and downs and duplications of the decade smack into your eightied face, and you'll be begging for reality. Or at least, the nineties. You'll know the eighties back to front, whether you want to or not, you'll know it as if you actually lived through it yourself, like it was only yesterday, like it really happened. You were there...weren't you?

People will see the eighties/Christmas/Britain/the world/anything else through the bright eyes of Channels 1 and 3, whose rock-hard schedules have family fun stamped all over them. Channels 2 and 4 see the eighties/Christmas/Britain/the world/anything else a little differently: truly, the dead-pan alternative, mostly sanctuary from the slapstick and, occasionally, life-enhancing. Allow me, as an expert, to generalise by saying that 1 and 3 are mostly wanky and 2 and 4 are often cranky: now and then you can't tell any of them apart.

It takes BBC1 and ITV just the first three days of the holiday to wipe the silly grin on to the nation's face: from Saturday the 23rd through to the big bad day itself it's an astonishing, merciless attack of the vulgars, a narcotic blend of flashing light entertainment, rampant joviality and *personality*. An army of intensely thoughtless and fiercely friendly *personalities* far too happy for our own damned good. You name the *personality*, it will be jumping for joy during the holidays, all the faces that forced fun through the cracks in T for Thatcher's Britain determined to prove that the eighties has been one long, giggly holiday.

It all starts for real in a white star-burst of eighties health, wealth and mad, good cheer with an hour of Cliff Richard, still celebrating like only a *personality* can, following crackpot Chris Tarrant's *Disney Special*, wrong Roy Walker's catchphrase special and leading us as if in a dream into robo-Cilla's *Blind Date*. Four hours that drop us in the dead centre of "e" for eighties entertainment (23 December, ITV, 5.15 to 9.10pm).

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Over on BBC1, life is just as much fun. You can flick as you wish from Tarrant to Monkhouse, Cliff to Les Dennis, Cilla to *Last of the Summer Wine*, a challenging warm-up period for the big day itself, helpfully supported by the six o'clock film on BBC1, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, the sequel to *Raiders of the Lost Ark* which ITV are of course showing two days later. A 90-minute *London's Burning* Christmas Special (no!) might just get you thinking that the eighties weren't all that simple-minded, quite ordinary really (ITV, 9.10pm). Then *The Songs of Andrew Lloyd Webber* (ITV, 11pm) brutishly reminds you how frightening things can be. Andrew, being a prominent example of the eighties personality, has no personality as we thought we understood the word.

Christmas Eve piles on the pressure of personality: it's quickly developing into a plague. The quite blameless Kylie will smile ceaselessly for nearly an hour at 1.15pm on ITV, and three

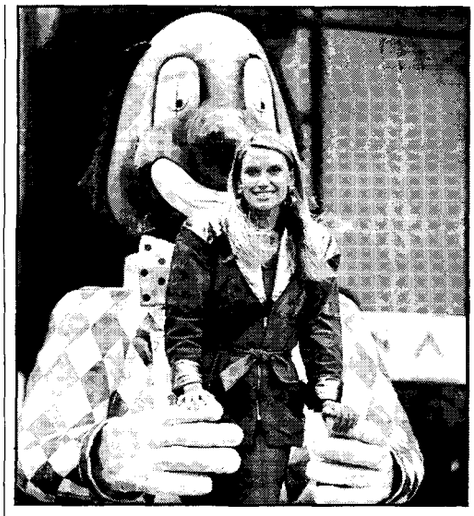
"A few days' screen-gazing over Christmas and you'll be begging for reality"

hours later her innocent friend Jason will inexplicably amuse Gloria Hunniford on her *Sunday Sunday* Christmas Special (yes!). I don't know how to tell you this, but there really is a *Bullseye* Christmas Special (ITV, 5pm), and then Sir Harry Secombe will sing "Once in Royal David's City" inside Durham Cathedral. Oddly enough, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas if he didn't, at least, it wouldn't be *special*. In the same odd way the eighties wouldn't be the eighties that it apparently was, if it wasn't for Noel Edmunds, whose *Telly Addicts* Christmas Special (I don't think I trust that word anymore) is an excuse for a sparkle of fame familiars from Chris Tarrant to Liza Goddard to expose their *personality* (BBC1, 7.15pm).

The big daddy day itself is a storm of fame. This is what we want, according to Channels 1 and 3, and they must be right: a few early morning hymns featuring some cheery Rev and Roy Castle, gently reminding us that we are celebrating the joyous birth of light entertainment, herds of comedy classics, comfy comedy chums being special, and a handful of big soft films. This is what we are, according to Channels 1 and 3, and they must be right: nuts, and proud of it.

Christmas Day, it's not yet 12.30pm. *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (featuring Julie Ege as the Scandinavian girl and Joanna Lumley as the English girl), and Bros, Jase, Gyles Brandreth, Jimmy Greaves, Russell Grant, Bugs Bunny, Foghorn Leghorn, Annie Rice, Michael Aspel, David Bellamy, Nick Owen, the cast of *Coronation Street* and Russ "Special Case" Conway have well and truly invaded our homes.

BBC1's Christmas Day shows us exactly what the nation thinks of itself: from 11am to early evening, running as happily as history, Noel Edmunds, *Porridge*, *Dad's Army*, *Some Mothers do 'Ave 'Em*, *Top of the Pops*, the Queen, *Bread*, *Only Fools and Horses* and,



Wiping the silly grin off the nation's face at Xmas: Anneka Rice (top), Cliff Richard, Jim Davidson and Cilla Black

crowned our king of comedy, Russ Abbott. ITV buckles under the weight of all this tradition, tipsily chucking up a *Home And Away*, a *Strike It Lucky* you-know-what with Barrymore and Bruno, a history of comedy that swerves from Cooper, Drake and Morecambe to O'Connor, Hill and Winters, and the highlights of the day, Cosgrove Hall's *The BFG* and Ken Barlow getting caught. A world outside Britain is represented by *Crocodile Dundee* or *Down And Out In Beverly Hills*.

Those of you who can't face facing up to the truth, who wish to abstain from *personality*, can spend December 23-25 with Channels 2 and 4, make-believing we are an imaginative nation, nuts and proud of it, in a different kitchen. The National Theatre of Brent's *Revolution* (23 December, BBC2, 7.35pm), followed by a two hour *Late Show Annual*, followed by Juzo Itami's *Tampopo*. BBC2's day of days has *AIDA* from the Met, *Babette's Feast*, and a documentary on PG Wodehouse.

If I thought about it, I would say that Channel 4 has been one of the best things in a *difficult* decade; during these three days you can see why. A *Batman* that goes back 20 years before the candy sixties version (23 December, 10.30am, and then every morning for 15 days), a Yugoslavian cartoon (*The Playful Robot*, 23 December, 7pm), *4 Play: Shalom Joan Collins* (23 December, 9pm), Jonathan Ross, *Cheers* (Christmas Day, 8.30pm), an Olivier tribute, *Circus Of The Sun* (Christmas Day, 7pm).

The week between then and New Year's Day is a chance for remaining personalities to stake their claim; don't forget Bruce Forsyth and Bob Carolgees, please, or Paul Daniels and Esther Rantzen.

By New Year's Eve, you have a clear four-way choice how to remember the decade: as a special decade of *personality* and fame, as Cilla says goodbye to the eighties, and her damehood, on ITV; the decade where we just didn't care as Julian Clary has a sticky new year on Channel 4; the end of history and irony and the beginning of a media-sealed new age as Clive James climbs on the eighties on BBC1 or, as a party that never quite ended in tears, as BBC2 charts ten years of postmod, post-punk post-acid pop into the early hours.

Suddenly, it will be post-eighties. The eighties; they were a laugh, weren't they: *Just Like That*, a celebration of Tommy Cooper, (28 December, Channel 4, 8pm); *Alf's Christmas Special*, ((30 December, ITV, 12pm); *Robin Williams At The Met* (29 December, Channel 4, 11pm); *Jackie Mason on Broadway* (29 December, BBC1, 11.55pm); *The Garry Shandling Christmas Show* (Christmas Eve, BBC2, 5.05pm); *Black Adder's Christmas Carol* (Boxing Day, BBC1, 9.30pm); *Clockwise* with John Cleese (Christmas day, BBC1, 10.20pm); *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (New Yar's Eve, BBC2, 7.15pm); *Prizzi's Honour* (30 December, BBC2, 8.30pm); Billy Wilder's *Buddy Buddy* (30 December, BBC2, 12.30am); *Hollywood Shuffle* (23 December, Channel 4, 11.30pm); *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* with Steve Martin (27 December, Channel 4, 12.40am).

Then again, you had to cry. *'Allo 'Allo* (5 January 1990, BBC1, 7.45pm).

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Sarah McDonald

Taking a break

News from nowhere

Nicci Gerrard escapes the cocks for the open skies of Lincolnshire

There's no narrative to this tale, apart from the sun's track across the sky. There are punctuations (breakfast, lunch, hot spicy supper) and images: a moon that hung above the horizon all day, a cat that slept in the same position almost all day, a pond where one goldfish lipped the surface, a pheasant that strode up and down the dilapidated tennis court. But on a winter's weekend nothing happens here except in your own head.

Getting to the women-only **Hen House** from London is an almost symbolic journey: away from the snarls and fumes of the metropolis to the unpeopled landscapes of north Lincolnshire. After the Intercity from King's Cross to Doncaster, where I slept and woke among three cigarettes, two briefcases and one portable phone, and then the emptier line to Grimsby, a taxi driver got us lost on the 15-minute road to Hawerby Hall. He left me in the dark, banging on the knocker of a huge unlit house. I wouldn't have been surprised if no one had answered. North Lincolnshire, with its open skies and skinny trees, is like a dreamscape, swallowing up figures carrying battered hold-alls and return tickets.

And anyway, Hawerby Hall has its own Gothic tale: 15 or so years ago a cruelly abused woman murdered her husband in this house. So what, I wondered, was I doing here when I could have been eating a cheap curry in Hackney with a friend and moaning about London? Away-from-it-all is fine—but nowhere quite a different matter. Then the hall lit up and the door swung on to the contemporary reassurance of white walls, modern paintings, querulous plumbing and the cardiganed figure of its owner Rachel Lever. No ghosts here, except the ones you bring with you.

And in the morning, of course, I saw that Hawerby Hall is no Rochester Hall. For a start, it's pink, and pink houses find it hard to hide secrets. In December the gardens have the kind of squelchy, mulchy charm that makes you think of duffle coats, wellies and children's laughter. Inside, the rooms are airy and warm. Books and tapes line the walls. The conservatory looks on to a stretch of fields with the sun at their far ends; the meeting room holds a piano and TV; the sitting room has a fire and hospitable sofas. There are no political posters and no slogans on the walls.

The Hen House opened in November 1987. After years spent in London as a typesetter, journalist and professional agitator, Rachel Lever sold her property and bought Hawerby Hall. She reopened the top of the house, replaced the roof, rewired, redecorated and made it into a place where women are made welcome for weekends, holidays and courses, and which can act as a venue for anything from birthday parties to training groups for both sexes.

The women who arrive throughout the year do not belong to a tight feminist circle—Jaeger and jeans in equal numbers have gradually soothed local suspicions. There are those who come to the Hen House to escape the cocks who can too often be pricks. There are those who come because, as a lesbian couple, they want to escape prying eyes. Or because, as anyone knows who's done it, being a single woman in an ordinary hotel can be an uneasy business: all those couples looking at ordnance survey maps over juice, rice crispies, sausage and eggs; all those dinners stuck in a corner with a plastic flower and covert glances.

Mothers and daughters, sisters, friends from different ends of the country, come to meet each other. Or you might come because it's a centre on the periphery—a beautiful place to pause for a while. I've never been so well and unobtrusively cared for except, perhaps, in a tiny hotel in Spain where miniature boxes of chocolates were hung over our door handle when we came back from dinner and our back packs were treated more respectfully than monogrammed leather.

On Saturday I borrowed a bike and cycled ten miles over the Downs to Louth (Lincolnshire suddenly acquiring hills). I met one car, one man with a stick and tweed cap, one dead finch upside down and frozen in the road, and two magpies. I sat in a pub where a 90-year-old woman, knocking back beer with whisky chasers, bought me a tomato juice. I walked through dead leaves and nettles to an old chapel. I read in front of a fire.

At no point did I feel like a customer, nor like a guest in someone else's home. The Hen House is not a hotel (there are no telephones, TVs or kettles in the bedrooms; no tariffs nor instructions), nor a bed and breakfast. When lots of women are there it's as if they've all been invited by a common friend; when they're alone, as I was, it's a chance to be solitary in a protected environment. For it's a large and intricate enough house to give you, simply, what you come for. You can walk your feet off, laugh your head off, weep your heart out, eat, sleep, dream.

In the summer or on a course it must be very different, cheerful and communal. When I was there it was an ideal place in which to sit with cat shit on my shoes and holes in my gloves to await the turn of the decade.

A weekend at the Hen House with full board costs less than £50. For further information: Rachel Lever, The Hen House, Hawerby Hall, North Thoresby, Lincolnshire DN36 5QL. Tel: 0742 840278

Body Blitz

Kirsty Milne tests her fitness at a health farm

"Of course," said the nurse regretfully, "you won't be nearly fit enough for the Body Blitz." I never honestly expected to be fit enough for the Body Blitz. The week before I arrived at **Champneys** they sent me an admonitory leaflet, prescribing exercises, proscribing binges, and offering advice on what to wear. I foresaw a weekend of humiliation and caffeine deprivation, and trailed off humbly to buy a leotard.

In fact, not a breath of asceticism is allowed to chill the scented Champneys air. "Health farm", with its connotations of carrot juice and conformism, is an an expression the fitness industry no longer likes to use in an individualist decade.

Champneys (which is owned by Guinness) describes itself instead as a "health resort", the biggest and the most expensive in Britain. Guests are addressed in the American idiom of self-improvement: "your personal goals", "your personal exercise programme", "your personal lifestyle plan".

This business-school ethos is pursued against an appropriate backdrop: the house, with its lawns and its topiary and its avenue of

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Donald Maxwell as Iago in OTELLO. Photo: Clive Barda

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beech trees, was built for the Rothschilds in the late 19th century. Manorial grandeur in the entrance hall shades off into nursery yellow and a warren of corridors where guests in tracksuits wander, faintly smiling. Champneys can accommodate up to 150 people, but numbers are deliberately kept down to maintain what the management call "a house-party atmosphere". Gym, squash courts, swimming pool, are all luxuriously empty.

The pool is a fantasy fulfilled. Blue enamelled butterflies shimmer up from the bottom and a glass roof reveals the stars at night. There are no small boys to dive-bomb you from above, and an abundance of virgin towels which it is not your responsibility to wash. But the heart of Champneys is a central hall modelled on a Japanese tea room. Guests wait beneath an artificial cherry tree to be called for their spa baths, their facials, and their morning stretch classes. Given the amount of money you pay to get to Champneys in the first place, it is alarming to discover how many of the "treatments" on offer cost extra. There is, however, a massage thrown in for each day's stay, with a sauna or steam bath before it.

A deep personal puritanism had begun to stir like a Kraken in the depths of the psyche, so I approached the steam cabinet room with some suspicion. It was a scene straight out of Samuel Beckett: a row of women's heads, towels swathed round their necks, bodies concealed in what looked like 1950s fridges.

We dripped convivially while a kitchen timer ticked its way through ten minutes. There followed an eerie interval in the rest room—a dozen women supine under infra-red light—and then the full body massage.

It is at moments like these that your body lets you down. I intended to lie still in sybaritic semi-somnolence, but local sensitivities (bizarrely, the area just above the knee) elicited some highly unprofessional twitching and yelping. The masseur looked pained and I emerged feeling rather ashamed of myself, though purring physically and smelling strongly of menthol.

Unfortunately the upshot of all this attention was a headache which pulsated through my skull for the rest of the day. Headaches are frequently reported by the women who compare notes over camomile tea. They are variously ascribed to the steam treatments, the central heating, and the flight of toxins from the body. (Toxin theorists confidently expect to feel worse before they feel better.)

While cigarettes and alcohol are naturally absent, meal-times are altogether more cheerful than you might expect of a health farm. True, calorie values appear on the menu like prices in some alien currency, but Champneys say they are seeing fewer desperate dieters and more holistic seekers of health. While the damned—on 500 calories a day—are segregated from the main dining room to shield them from temptation, the saved tuck into halibut, guinea fowl, and elegant salads garnished with a single strawberry.

The sophisticated regulars, who know their seaweed wrap from their vibromassage, make up about a third of the Champneys clientele and will stay for weeks at a stretch.

At weekends they are joined by amicable mother-daughter partnerships, married couples escaping from their children, burnt-out professionals seeking a few days' release. (The expression "quality time" is used without irony.) People talk quietly about mortgages and divorce, and, if pressed, will remark on the levelling tendency of dressing gowns. They rush to the relaxation class and groan about the body conditioning circuit—it takes a determined brand of individualism not to scuttle around trying to get your £166 a night's worth at Champneys.

As I packed to leave, the voice of my own vestigial Calvinism cavilled ungraciously, muttering that you should not need to be pampered and cocooned like a Turkish pasha if you look after yourself properly in daily life. It also complained about the possibility of getting bored, something others had already faced up to. A woman in the spa, staying at Champneys for a weekend with her husband, mislaid him as early as lunchtime on Saturday. Spurs were playing at Luton, and he had gone to watch the football.

Champneys are at Wigginton, Tring, Hertfordshire Tel: 0442 863351. Single room with bathroom costs £166 a night, including meals. To go there for the day costs £79.95

Milking the cow before breakfast

David Buckley puts his wellies on for a weekend on a farm

Winter is about light. Low suns behind skeletal trees and a brief high noon tinged with maturity before it's born. And winter driving is about headlights. Leaving Sheffield at five o'clock on a Friday evening the oncoming headlights threatened like tracer shells and we were too closely inspected by the sealed beams of someone driving a Ford Machismo behind.

We huddled in the inside lane, frightened of this adult playground full of bullies. But later, turning on to a narrow unfenced road across the North York Moors about ten miles from Whitby, I looked in the rear-view mirror and saw only blackness.

Now headlights revealed secrets: sprays of coarse grass as magic as the stage-lit leaves of the Forest of Arden; hibernating railway carriages in the deep hollow of Grosmont Station, terminus of the North York Moors railway; and finally the livid eyes of the sheepdog considering our arrival at **Red House Farm** with what looked like a suspicious lack of ambiguity.

Red House Farm is about 400 years older than the telephone box by which you can find it in the village of Egton, one of a cluster of villages—Aislaby and Beck Hole, Goathland and Grosmont—which civilise the north-eastern edge of the North York Moors. It's a working farm: a hundred or so sheep; half a dozen calves; a couple of suckling cows; some arable land; and a clownish rabble of hens and brilliant copper-coloured cockerels.

We—Karen, myself, and our two-year-old son Joe—had been asked to seek a weekend escape but I'd been doubtful whether a farm could offer it. After all, farming's a business, and twin-bedded rooms in guest houses aren't teepees.

And on the first night I too easily fell victim to childhood memories of hostile digs in Filey, hissing to Karen in my bed-and-breakfast whisper that we ought to leave the beds where they were. But Karen has a freer spirit than me, and freer spirits move twin beds together despite the thunder on the ceiling below. So whoopee—a double bed and winter cuddles; except Joe thought so too and I ended up in his bunk.

But next day we awoke to mist and a magical scene. Outside the window ancient sheep lay like grey sawn-up logs in the frosty morning. These were Border Leicesters in soft focus, faces white and chubby with wool. "Ducks" shouted Joe and we feared for his sanity, but he'd spotted a flight of pigeons, the only movement in the silence.

It was, of course, a snapshot of escape. The sort of scene I'd already had in my head and come looking for. Just as it felt like an Enid

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Blyton sort of morning as we went off to milk the cow before breakfast. The Famous Five in Nappies.

Aldo the farmer was ready in the hall with a small aluminium milk jug and led us with a broad stride and flubbering wellies to Jessica the Jersey cow. Our tour of the farm took about an hour. And we repeated it in the evening and on the Sunday morning as well. Joe never did pick up the courage to stroke Jessica, but I steeled myself, and she felt like a carpet.

He did, though, stroke a chicken that evening under a light fixed up outside the old stable, and he's talked about it ever since. He's also talked about the six black Angus calves he watched feeding, one from Jessica and the others from buckets of powdered milk; and about the rounding up of the sheep by the glowering sheepdog which greeted our arrival. "If he bites I'll give him to you," said Aldo generously, not noticing my wan smile and hugging what had now become a bouncing, friendly Tigger. "Old man and his dog," chirped Joe, tactlessly muddling the title of his favourite TV programme. Aldo, I'd guess, was a young sixtyish.

His passion was restoring old farm machinery. His tractors were 30 and 40 years old; his wood and steel threshing machine of a similar age. But he also had a passion for animals. He

Outside ancient sheep lay like grey sawn-up logs in the frosty morning

talked with disgust of the cruelty of battery-hen farming, damned artificial insemination and the foolishness of buying cheap feed which poisoned stock. And he kissed his calves, playing with them like kittens, letting them suck his hands with their sandpaper tongues.

And yet these calves were destined for sale and then, presumably, the slaughterhouse. He'd nursed a cat back from the edge of death to rat-catching fitness, but after that day's annual shoot on the farm he told me they shot 34 pheasants, one woodcock and a rabbit.

Perhaps in struggling to make sense of all this I'm merely displaying my own ill-informed townie attitudes, but I don't think so. The "natural" relationship between life and death is always up for redefinition. We make choices about how to do things even if centuries of custom disguise the fact. It may be the way of the countryside, but then traffic jams are the way of the town.

But the real memory is of the mist, the smell of a farmyard, and the bleakness of the North Sea in winter. It's also of the delight of a two year old able to leave his footprints over the vast acreage of an empty beach at Whitby, the sand tawny under a low sun.

I stopped whispering after the first night. We were made too welcome for that. But I made sure we put the beds back.

David Buckley stayed with Mr and Mrs Pickering at Red House Farm, Egton, Whitby, North Yorkshire. Tel: 0947 85269. Cost for weekend around £50 including breakfast and evening meal.

Getting away from it all

John Mannion seeks refuge in a monastic retreat

To be a Catholic means to be in the world but not of it. The snares and delusions of money, power, fame and even family life are to be avoided like the devil. A retreat allows you to escape the spiritual battlefield; a time when your bodily needs are taken care of so that you can concentrate on important matters like death, redemption, heaven and hell.

My retreat at the Grange, **Ampleforth Abbey**, over a foggy winter weekend included, in the midst of its talks, prayers, silences and discussions, one period of "free time". I had no weekend shopping to do, no children to look after, no telephone calls I could make and nothing whatsoever—other than improving literature—to read. The only distraction was a walk in a fog-obscured valley full of Ampleforth School rugby pitches. In such circumstances (not so much a dark night of the soul, more a murky afternoon) there are only two possible reactions: either you begin to think seriously about your life, your relationships with people and with God or you fall asleep. I fell asleep.

Serious thought proved unavoidable in the evening when the retreat I had joined, a group of men and women from Knaresborough, was visited by monks from the Abbey. Brother Kentigern, a 19-year-old novice, Friar Aelred, the warden of the Grange, and Friar Columba, the retreat-giver, answered questions about monastic life at Ampleforth: do monastic vows supersede marriage vows? (yes, apparently); why do so many of the monks have anglo-saxon names? (usually they inherit them from former members of the community); and so on. The issue of women priests seemed a less palatable topic but Friar Columba recommended taking the *Tablet* (the magazine for Catholic intellectuals) for a more balanced perspective.

And so, at about 10 o'clock on Saturday night, to bed. The rooms at the Grange are plain but comfortable, and each is equipped with a small study desk for those who think it inappropriate to read religious works in bed. None of the bedroom doors have locks.

Retreats at Ampleforth have a distinctive flavour because you can join in the Holy Offices of the monastery. The first of these is Matins at the ungodly hour of 6am. On Sunday, as a special treat, the monks get a lie-in: Matins isn't until 6.45am. Approaching Matins on a chilly December morning you begin to appreciate why the traditional monk's gear includes a hood and sleeves wide enough for both hands. Retreatants and other visitors sit with the monks in the choir stalls which are cut off from the main part of the Abbey church by an altar screen. The prayers and psalms of the office are sung in a plain chant which fills the otherwise empty building with strangely attractive music.

Before Mass, Friar Aelred told me about life at the Grange, which is regularly used at weekends by Catholic and non-Catholic groups (who range from Anglicans to architects). Anglicans, he says, prefer the stricter type of retreat where you are silent for the entire weekend. He also said that there are still rare requests for the kind of hell fire and damnation redemptorist retreats that Stephen Daedalus experienced in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Of the group that I joined, most were Catholics and mostly they were escaping from husbands, wives and teenage children.

When I returned home my four-year-old son asked me what I had been doing *all* weekend. He didn't seem impressed when I described myself sitting around and thinking. But I must confess that I had a very good time. I had arrived at the Abbey with the beginnings of a major headache. When I left I was feeling calm, relaxed and clear-headed. I'm back in the world but a little more prepared not to be of it.

A long weekend with full board at The Grange, Ampleforth Abbey, York, costs around £40. It is fully booked by groups at weekends throughout 1990, but individuals can make their own retreats during the week and, if space permits, at weekends. Information from the National Retreat Centre, Liddon House, 24 South Audley St, London W1Y 5DL.

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VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Dawn King at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ by Friday preceding publication date. Please note this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 01-739-1645.

WESTMINSTER Carers Service. We offer respite care in the home to relieve carers for a few hours a week. Do you have any spare time? We need reliable, responsible and caring people who would enjoy being with an elderly or disabled person enabling their carer to have a break. Please contact Sarah or David on 976 5999 or write to W.C.S., St James the Less Centre, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2PT.

MIND in Kensington & Chelsea is looking for volunteers to help in it's Wednesday evening clubs (2 hours), one in North Kensington and one in South Kensington, and it's Sunday lunch club. You will be valued and supported. Please call on 727 8975.

COMMITTED VOLUNTEERS needed for an evening East London advice/information and counselling project for drug related problems. We provide evening training to volunteers before practical experience begins. Are you interested? Call 383 5071 or write for an application form enclosing a SAE to Roz Marten, Coordinator, APA, 5-7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SS. Application deadline 1st Feb 1990.

BONDWAY NIGHTSHELTER is an emergency provision for homeless men, require volunteers (aged 18 - 30) to work for approx. 6 months. Allowance and accommodation provided. We recruit throughout the year so welcome applications from those wishing to be considered at a later stage. For further details contact: Volunteer Co-ordinator, P O Box 374, London SW8 1SJ. Enclosing a S.A.E. (due to interview restrictions, applicants should be resident in U.K.).

HOMES FOR Homeless People London Fundraising Dept. is looking for volunteers to look after this small office. Answering press calls, typing, filing etc. Enthusiasm and sense of humour more important than experience. If you can give some time contact Paddy Hunter Murphy on 01 253 7766.

FULL-TIME VOLUNTEERS are needed now and throughout 1990 to help people with severe physical disabilities to live independently in the community. No experience needed, just enthusiasm, flexibility and sense of humour. Free accommodation, all bills paid, an allowance of £40 p/w & valuable work experience. Interesting work in a friendly, supportive environment. Placements in north or south London. For more info. please contact Sue Denney at SHAD, Selby Site, Selby Road, London N17 8JN, or ring 01-885 5569.

P.A.L.S. (Partners Against Loneliness Scheme) is a new scheme in Kensington which aims to find friends for people with learning difficulties (mental handicap). If you live or work in or near the borough and feel you can offer friendship and support to someone with learning difficulties then phone Rachel Fyson on 960 0995 or write to P.A.L.S. 20 Kingsbridge Road, London W10.

THE SAMARITANS is a charity committed to providing emotional support 24 hours a day, every day for those who are lonely and desperate. You don't need qualifications or experience to join them. However you must be a good listener/open minded and able to maintain a regular weekly shift. Please ring your local Branch - number is in the book.

THAMES **HELP**

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It appears three times a week on Thames Television at 6.50pm approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

Thames Help is taking a two week break and returns on Tuesday 9th January. We'd like to wish our viewers a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

THAMES TELEVISION XXI

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

CHESTER AID to the Homeless are looking for volunteer workers for their hostels. For 6 to 12 months. Full board, holiday pay and weekly allowance paid. For further details telephone Anita Presford on 0244-318360 or write to Roodee House, 22 Grosvenor Street, Chester GH1 2DD.

THE ELKANAN Elkes Association for Intercommunity Understanding. March/ April Israel volunteer required from 2 - 6 weeks to work with elderly & mentally handicapped. Experience preferred. Phone (0533) 415582, (0533) 552421,. (0533) 775369.

UNPAID VOLUNTEERS needed with experience or particular interest in art activities who can offer a regular committment to work with elderly patients in Greenwich District Hospital, SE10. If not living locally, the ability to travel would be required. Please contact Linda McCullock on 318-0310.

LEEDS DEVELOPMENT Education Centre seeks unpaid workers. The Centre serves teachers locally and nationally, and offers a range of unpaid work - library work, administration, work in schools and with teachers etc. We aim to raise awareness of international development issues - call Nigel on Leeds 784030.

BATTERSEA BEFRIENDING Scheme needs caring volunteers able to make a committment of one year, offering friendship and support to someone isolated as a result of a mental health problem. Excellent training starts end of January 1990 (one evening p/w). On going support provided and expenses paid. No experience needed - joint committment. If interested, please ring Alison Croker, Wandsworth Volunteer Bureau on 01-870 4319.

CHILDREN'S Country Holiday Fund. Volunteers are required urgently in the following London boroughs to act as the funds representative. Dealing with all matters concerning referrals of children from local agencies. Well organised people with an aptitude for paperwork and willing to visit the childrens family home. Plenty of spare time needed especially between March & August. Southwark, Kensington, Westminster, Ealing, Lewisham and Tower Hamlets.

A GENEROUS ALLOWANCE is paid to House Assistants at Guildford Cyrenian Hostel for 12 single homeless men as well as free board and lodging in separate accommodation. We are looking for responsible people of 19+ to work for a minimum of 6 months. Phone 0483 60762 or write to 43 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4UL.

CHRISTMAS DAY - are you free on Christmas Day to help us with our party for 130 local pensioners? We at Pensioners Link Westminster need help with transport and also at the party itself. If you can spare the time please ring us at Westminster Pensioners Link - 289 1849 and speak to Anita, Otto, or Sarah.

CHRISTIAN AID needs volunteers each weekday morning to help unpack the sacks of postage stamps arriving in response to Simon Mayo's Radio One Christmas appeal. Travel expenses within London paid. (Nearest tube Waterloo). If you can help please ring Valerie Flessati at Christian Aid 01-620 4444.

SWANSEA PRISON VISITORS are looking for volunteers of both sexes to visit adults and young offenders on a weekly basis. The need is to develop an empathetic relationship with prisoners in order to prevent institutionalisation and to encourage them, in a non-judgemental way to alter the course of their lives. An ability to listen is of prime importance. Volunteers need Home Office approval. Ethnic minority volunteers are particularly welcome. Contact Tony Prior, Chairman, (evenings) 0792 776372.

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For an informal discussion telephone Lin Simmonds or Maggie Wedgewood 091- 2328520 Ext 6207 or write for an application form and further details to Children's Play Section, 7, Saville Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8DQ.

Closing Date: 3 January, 1990.

Applicants are considered irrespective of ethnic origin, disability, sex or marital status. Applications are positively welcomed from black, ethnic minority and disabled persons (who are currently under-represented in the workforce). Disabled applicants with DRO support are guaranteed interviews. Most jobs are available for job sharing.

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Cleveland County Council

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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There is a vacancy in the Education Social Work Service, for an Education Worker based in the Middlesbrough Area. The successful candidate will be responsible for implementing the Departments policies relating to school attendance, children with special educational needs, child protection, social work assistance and the maintenance of links between home, school and the Authority. Officers work as members of a team with regular supervision from the Team Leader and Area Officer. Applicants should be car drivers and have knowledge of both social work policies and the Education Services.

An essential car user allowance is payable.

Cleveland Education Social Work Service is committed to a social work approach in order to help children benefit from the educational opportunities available.

Applicants should hold the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work or a similar qualification.

Closing Date 12th January, 1990.

Senior Child Care Officer

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This post is temporary until 31st March, 1991.

Closing date 29th December, 1989.

Full removal expenses, Estate Agents/legal fee will be paid in approved cases. In addition a payment for disturbance/settling-in costs and a lodging allowance will be made where appropriate. Temporary housing accommodation may also be available within the County area. A car leasing package is available to all authorised car users.

Application forms are available from the County Education Officer, Education Offices, Woodlands Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 3BN. Tel: (0642) 248155, ext. 3093/2913.

We are an equal opportunities employer. All applicants who have the support of the Disablement Resettlement Officer will be granted an interview.

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Application forms are available from the Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN, and should be lodged there by 19 January 1990.

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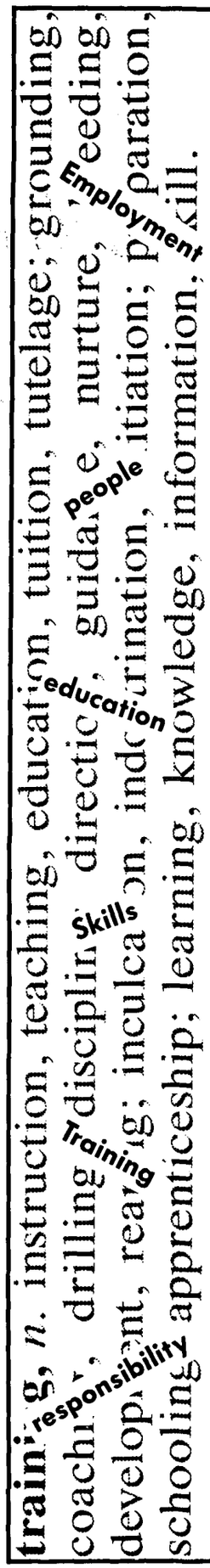

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Further details and an application form, to be returned by 12 January 1990, can be obtained from: Ms G. Anobile, PSD4, The Training Agency, Room N206, Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ, or telephone (0742) 594559.

The Training Agency is an equal opportunity employer and is firmly committed to equal opportunity policies. Applications are welcome from all suitably qualified and experienced candidates, irrespective of age, sex, racial origin or disability.

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(REF N5)

£15,570 – £16,722

Greenwich Council's Housing Aid Centre urgently needs a Tenant Support Worker to give advice and assistance to residents of Thamesmead Town - a large ex-GLC estate now owned and managed by a private company. The postholder will be required to develop and implement the Council's strategy towards large-scale and corporate private landlords in general.

The job is personally demanding and some evening work will be necessary. At least two years experience in Housing or Community work is required, as is a clear ability to support tenants/residents groups.

The successful candidate should be an able campaigner with skills to handle press and publicity issues.

Application form from Director of Housing Services, London Borough of Greenwich, Peggy Middleton House, 50 Woolwich New Road, Woolwich, London SE18 6HQ. Telephone 01-316 6087 (Ansaphone). Please quote the above reference when telephoning or in subsequent correspondence.

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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3108 Set by Tom Foolery
Telephone conversations in which a crossed line leads to a startling revelation. 200 words max and entries to be in by 11 January.

No 3105 Set by Amy Turtle
New Statesman & Society leaders as written by Enid Blyton, Sylvia Plath, Barbara Cartland or Kathy Acker.

Report by Ms de Meaner
It has to be said: those compers who made it up the 40 million stairs to the *NSS* Christmas party contributed more than their fair share of style and panache to the event. The sight of E O Parrott holding court, the centre of an awed and wondering throng, inspired many a guest to enquire of their neighbour: "Who *is* that man?" Apologies for non-attendance have been rolling in, including a pathetic list of excuses from Simon Herbertson: "Besides the fact that I have no money and must work till 10.30 tonight, who would look more out of place amidst the glitterati than me? Holes in my shoes, baggy cords (unless I wear my Little Chef trousers), still low and shaky... and truth to tell, terribly shy." I presume this is to make sure you win this week? Good try, Si! You haven't made it. For all those who weren't asked, this was an intended slight and the only punishment considered suitable for the trash you've sent in over the years. Only the regular *stars* of the comp complex were on the list. If there are any other stars out there who didn't get an invite, put it down to the Christmas post/your inflated ego/our incompetence and resolve in a spirit of New Year resolution-itis to overlook the *faux pas*.

To more mundane matters—the leaders. A leader, for all those who sent in torrid extracts from Cartlandesque novels or dialogue between two jolly characters called "Sarah" and "Stuart" ("Really, Stuart," said Sarah scornfully, "don't you know *anything*?"), a leader is an article expressing a magazine's opinion or explaining its stance. So into the bin with D G Adler and Keith Norman, for a start. And I mean start. £15 for those who managed to achieve the semblance of editorial authority.

Have fun, my sausages, and be back at the coalface in 1990!

Barbara Cartland
When one reads the newspapers one can be in no doubt that ours is a terrible world, with violence to women a daily occurrence.

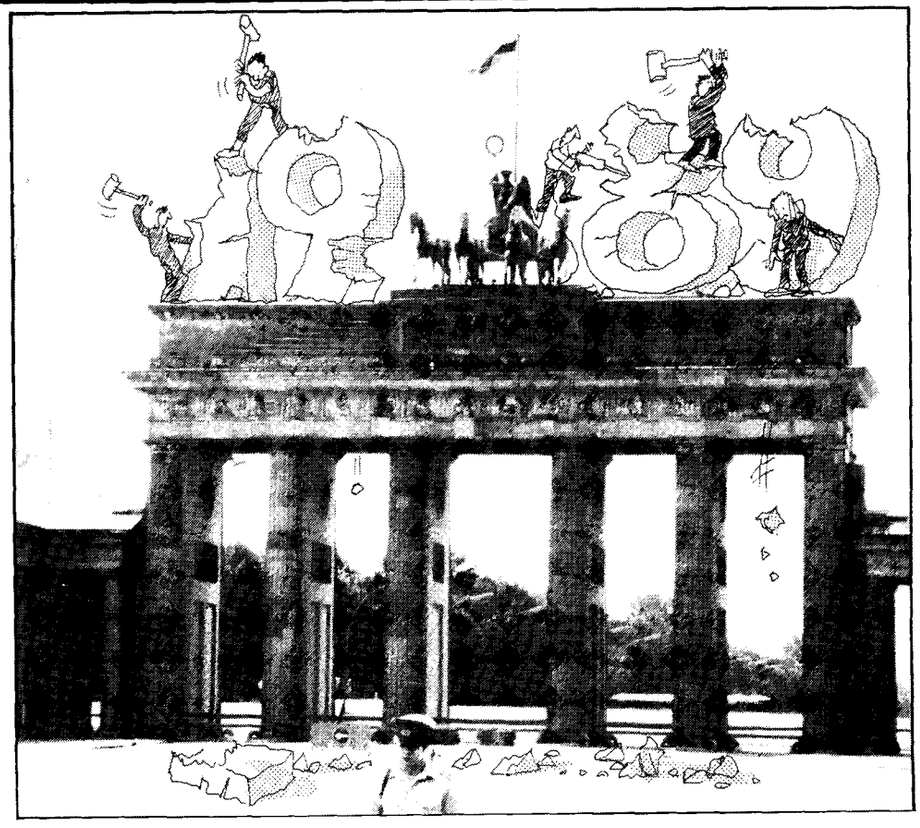
While one cannot condone it, one does see that men feel threatened by dominating women.

How can they be expected to respect women who wear boiler suits and have tongues to match their rough clothing? A woman should be soft, gentle and ladylike enough to succeed without causing rancour. What can be more persuasive than pink angora and chiffon, worn with pearls, and a demure smile?

Taking Barbara Cartland as an example, one can see that it is eminently possible to be independent and successful without brow beating men, or stepping on the toes of other women. There is no need for crudity, something to which she has never stooped in her best-selling novels, nor any possible excuse for bad manners.

There is just too much discourtesy about today. If women wish to stop men being violent towards them, they must prove that they need them. Vulnerability is the greatest

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE



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protection against the feminist-hater. It draws out the better instincts from the basest man.

Katie Mallett

Barbara Cartland

The momentous changes happening in eastern Europe merit a guarded welcome. There is, however, a danger that in the rush to democracy some older virtues may be forgotten. We refer to the sheer gaity of pre-war society there. Why, when we were young, staying with some Bohemiam archduke, we danced the night away with scarce a thought for the morrow! Those wonderful Hussars, with their cuirasses and so forth, turned our maidenly knees to jelly! And speaking of jelly, their gaiety was surely due to our consuming lots of that wonderful product, Royal Queen Bee Jelly.

But back to the present. It is equally important that the undoubted virtues of eastern European regimes are still preserved. We believe, for instance, that there are still large numbers of virgins there. How wonderful if our own girls could learn from them! When we were young, no honourable young man would make an improper suggestion to the girl he was escorting. Indeed, he would treat her like a queen! And speaking of queens, we could all improve our virginity by harnessing the miraculous powers of Royal Queen Bee Jelly. Buy some now.

Noel Petty

Enid Blyton

We used to call them the Infamous Five—those bad boys from Eastern Avenue. What a gang of nasty bullies they were! There was Polo, Checko, Hungry, Germy and Bulgy—and they were all as bad as one another. Shabby and dirty, they never had any pocket money to buy all those scrummy things that our nice bright shops in Western Drive are full of! And when you called at their houses to see how they were getting on, they were always very rude and suspicious. Sometimes, they even told you to GO AWAY! Or words to that effect.

But now, suddenly, these rough, scruffy lads seem to be turning over a new leaf. I say "seem" because they'll have to keep it up, won't they? Checko's uncle, kind, clever Mr Havel, has obviously given his nephew a really good talking-to and made him pull up his socks and no mistake. And in future they're not going to be those horrid, garish red socks either...

Margin Fagg

Enid Blyton

Mrs Thatcher is jolly fierce isn't she? Especially with foreigners who just don't understand our ways. She gets cross with them, because they don't believe in fair play and don't wash very often either. They like to give money to poor people who haven't even done anything to deserve it, and they want us to do the same. What a funny idea! We certainly shan't be doing any of that while Mrs Thatcher is there to stand up for us, now shall we?

But it's no use being a crosspatch all the time. (Look at Big Ears, for instance.) Mrs T has got so bad-tempered that some rather brave folk said they wanted a new leader. They wanted someone like Mr Heseltine who would be nice to all those foreign sillies. Oh dear, it caused no end of trouble! But everything turned out all right in the end, and Mrs Thatcher is still leader.

We're glad, aren't you? Because now you can be sure that the next prime minister will be nice Mr Kinnock. He'll know how to deal with interfering foreign types who're up to no good, never fear! But perhaps he won't be *quite* such an old crosspatch. What do you think?

Peter Norman

Sylvia Plath

Daddy
We love you
With your pleas, please cry
Of unity.
ACH DU, ACH DU, ACH DU.
Daddy,
Though others who say they know
you better,
Use other words: Chancellor, Kohl.
Coal-black daddy,
Who Kohl calls back upon a
Fatherland—together at last—
VATER, in speech made to
Adoring crowd.
And we—Jew—Ach du—
Say why it tears us that
You cannot call us so,
Tears like the knife taking life.
That because of you
Your back-stabbed, life-dragging
Past of a country with
Its vast, black Nazi shade
Cannot be VATERLAND again.
This luxury of past—
Daddy—
Vater—
Cannot be.
No flag-waving, craving unity.
They will not let it, let you,
Your allies (all spies?).
But Daddy,
We love you.
Though your Kohl black blood
Might fall upon our white skins.
ACH DU.

Adrian Weston

CHESS

Looking back over the past decade of chess the most striking single feature of the 1980s has been the way in which two great players have completely dominated their contemporaries. If Elo ratings give any basis at all for historical comparison, those contemporaries have been just as strong as the leading grandmasters of other generations. During any other era the likes of Timman, Short, Ljubojevic, Beliavsky and Yusupov could have looked down with complacent indulgence upon lesser chess-playing mortals. But competing with Kasparov and Karpov has been a humbling experience, and by now everyone who has been through it is suffering something approaching an inferiority complex.

The next development that can be expected is the relative decline of Karpov. At his peak during the first half of the Eighties, in the past couple of years, while still remaining by far the best of the rest, he has started to show signs of fallibility. The younger Kasparov is still on an upward curve. Crushing all opposition at the recent Belgrade tournament he has now lifted his rating above the 2,800 mark. If there is a 1990 championship match between the two of them —and, barring squabbles over organisation, only Timman can now prevent a repetition of that fixture—it will be a much more one-sided affair than the titanic series of matches that the two Ks fought out between 1984 and 1987. So the question is: who will emerge as Kasparov's rival in the 1990s?

The clear favourite is the youngest of the Polgar sisters. It can hardly be denied that Judit, 13, is the strongest player of her age that there has ever been. In terms of tigerish aggression she has little left to learn from anybody, as the following game shows: **J Polgar - Azmaiparashvili, OHRA International 1989. Pirc Defence. 1 e4 d6 2 d4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 f4 Nf6 5 Nf3 c5 6 dxc5 Qa5 7 Bd3 Qxc5 8 Qe2 0–0 9 Be3 Qa5 10 h3 e5 11 0-0-0?!** Like Kasparov, Judit, if she errs, errs on the side of boldness. Castling long here is overdoing things a bit. **Nbd7 12 g4 d5! 13 exd5 e4 14 Nxe4 Qxa2?** Black's response so far has been correct. If he had played 14... Nxe4 15 Bxe4 Re8! Judit's optimism might well have been punished. **15 Nc3! Qa1+ 16 Kd2 Qxb2 17 Bd4 Qb4 18 Rb1 Qa5 19 Ra1 Qc7 20 Ne5 Qd8** Black has regained his pawn and driven the White K out of cover. But other factors are more important: White dominates the centre and contests the long black diagonal. **21 Qf3 Re8 22 Rhe1 Nb6 23 Ra5 Nfd7 24 d6 Nxe5 25 fxe5 Be6 26 Rc5 Qg5+ 27 Be3 Qd8 28 Ne4** Judit starts to concentrate her forces on the square f6. **Nd7 29 Bg5 Qb6 30 Rb5 Qd4 31 Qf4 Nxe5 32 Bf6!** See diagram 1. 32 Nf6+? would be quite wrong because of 32... Bxf6 33 Qxd4 Nf3+. But now Black is in deep trouble, unless there is some hope of salvation in Korchnoi's startling suggestion of 32... Bf5!?. I don't believe that move, but you're welcome to try analysing it! **Bc4 33 Bxe5 Rxe5** Or 33...Bxe5 34 Rxe5, with similar effect. **34 Nf6+ Bxf6 35 Qxd4 Rxe1 36 Qxc4 Rae8 37 d7 Bg5+ 1-0** Has anyone been capable of comparable feats at a similar stage of development? Bobby Fischer, perhaps? The brilliant game that he won against Donald Byrne (White) is a well known anthology piece, but the fact that Fischer was also 13 when he played it gives me an excuse to jog your memory and draw comparisons: **1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 d4 0-0 5 Bf4 d5 6 Qb3 dxc4 7 Qxc4 c6 8 e4 Nbd7 9 Rd1 Nb6 10 Qc5 Bg4 11 Bg5?** Slightly careless. The refutation is stunningly severe. **Na4!** The first point is that if 12 Nxa4 Nxe4 regains the piece with advantage. **12 Qa3 Nxc3 13 bxc3 Nxe4! 14 Bxe7 Qb6 15 Bc4** The second point is 15 Bxf8 Bxf8 16 Qb3 Nxc3!. **Nxc3 16 Bc5** The third point is 16 Qxc3 Rfe8. **Rfe8+ 17 Kf1 Be6!** The fourth and finest point is a Queen sacrifice which White can hardly refuse in view of 18 Bxe6 Qb5+ or 18 Qxc3 Qxc5!. **18 Bxb6 Bxc4+ 19 Kg1 Ne2+ 20 Kf1 Nxd4+ 21 Kg1 Ne2+ 22 Kf1 Nc3+ 23 Kg1 axb6 24 Qb4 Ra4 25 Qxb6 Nxd1** and Black won easily enough.

Splendid stuff, but if we take the broader context into account it becomes apparent that at age 13 Fischer was not performing at anything near Polgar's current level. The Byrne-Fischer game was played in the Rosenwald Trophy, a tournament with a field of 12, exclusively American and, with the exception of Reshevsky (who won), not particularly strong. Yet Fischer won only one other game in the event and lost four. Nowadays it would cause a sensation if Judit Polgar were to have a result as bad as that! Finally, if you can find a spare moment for solving during your Christmas revels, our second diagram is a pretty little study by Paul Keres, in which White is to play and win. Once you spot the main idea it shouldn't take you long. If you don't spot it, ... b2+ is a difficult threat to cope with.

Diagram 1

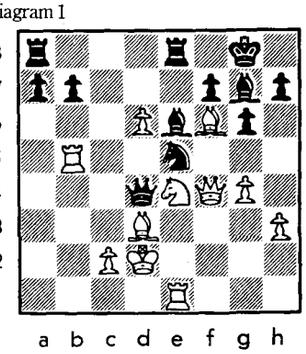
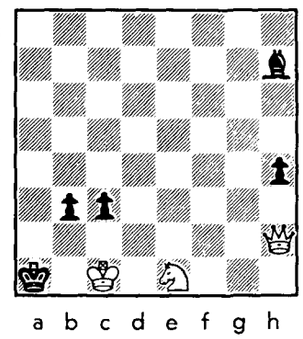


Diagram 2



George Botterill

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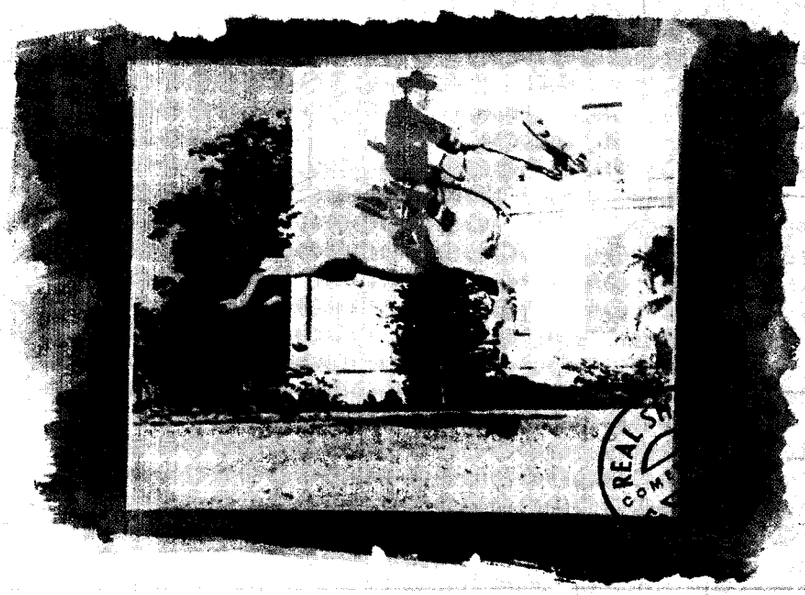
There is a region in Europe where they make one of the world's great wines.

¿The name of this region?



Jerez in Andalucia. ¿The name of this wine? Sherry.

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